

COMMUNITY, CITY, OR COUNTY:
WHO'S BEHIND THE IMPASSE IN CHESTER'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT?

by

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Submitted to the Department of Urban Studies and Planning
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ABSTRACT

This thesis uncovers and analyzes the underlying causes of the inability of a medium-sized industrial-based city to implement an economic development strategy. The impasse in economic development stems from a series of conflicts: within the community, between the community and the city government, and between the city government and the county.

In order to analyze the impasse in economic development, this document relies on a list of success factors found in the literature of Ross Gittell. Gittell's static factors are supplemented with a more dynamic analysis provided by the stage theory of community development, based on the work of Mel King. The author adds her own concept of a social movement to round out the analysis. The author uses interviews, planning documents, and other secondary sources to provide historical and background data.

Thesis Supervisor: Christopher Tilly

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PREFACE

In the summer of 1990, I had the opportunity to work with several activists and planners working in and for the city of Chester, Pennsylvania. I was struck by the commitment of these people, as well as their frustration. For some Chester is a city in desperate need of help. For others, it is their home or former home. Although the people I met were intelligent and dedicated, they felt overwhelmed with the expanse of social and economic problems in Chester. "Where do we begin?" was a question that I heard all too often.

This thesis is my attempt at answering this question. It does not provide the definitive answer to Chester's problems -- but maybe a place to begin. Through my six weeks of research, I learned much about Chester. However, six weeks is a very short time to get to know a city. The people that I interviewed (and many others that I was not able to speak with) have a much more intimate knowledge than I. Given the limits of my knowledge, I submit a critical review of what I believe are some of the underlying problems in Chester. Some may find my criticisms too harsh; others may think my analysis is not fully informed. In any event, it is a thorough analysis given the time period I had to read, research, and think about what I and others had discovered.

My hope is that this document sparks debate as well as discussion. I also hope that what I've written causes activists, planners, citizens, and others who are important to Chester's revitalization to rethink their approach to Chester's problems with an understanding of how their actions are viewed in the eyes of others, especially the poor and disenfranchised of Chester, for whom we profess to be working.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Because this thesis (as well as my experience at MIT) is the result of not only my own hard work but was aided by the help and support of others, there are many people I would like to thank:

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The DUSP class of 1991, whose intelligence, as well as their commitment and respect for the lives and needs of other people, inspires me.

Finally, my husband-to-be, Evens Edouard, who has done just about all of the above --- and more.

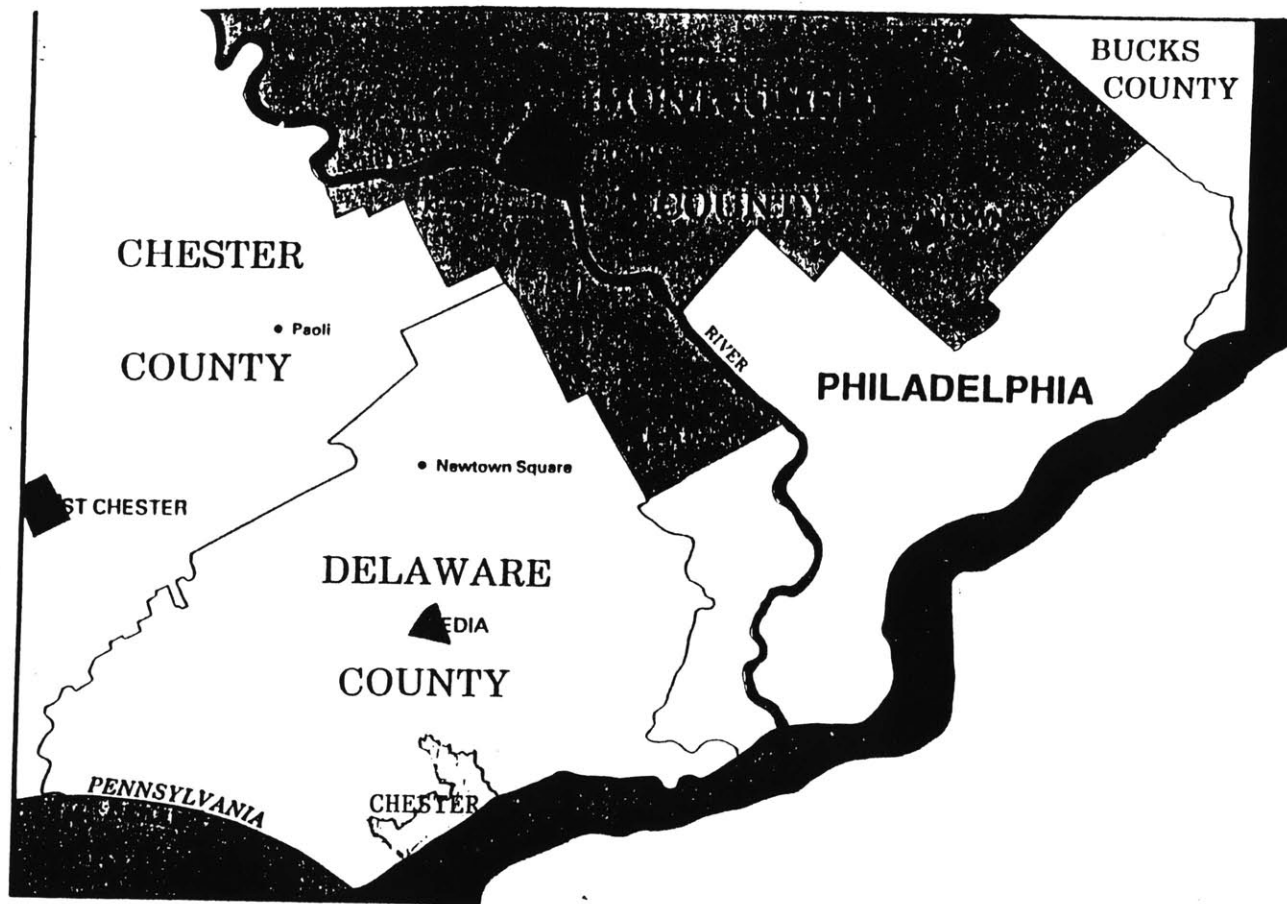
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INTRODUCTION

Economic development in the city of Chester, Pennsylvania is in a state of impasse. Chester is currently marred by physical deterioration along its waterfront, a notorious reputation for political corruption, citizen apathy, and several failed attempts at community-supported revitalization strategies.

However, in the early part of this century, Chester's economic base -- manufacturing -- was growing and the city's economy thrived along with it. Shipbuilding, iron works, textile mills and oil production comprised the heavy manufacturing base. Chester's growth as a commercial and industrial center mirrors its population growth, which reached its apex in 1920 and remained relatively stable throughout the 1950's. The most prosperous periods in Chester's economic history were during the two World Wars, when Chester produced much of the artillery for the military. ¹

Since the 1960's, Chester's economy has been on a steady decline. Much of Chester's economic deterioration is easy to explain. The decline in Chester's manufacturing industries lowered employment. Lower prospects for employment caused a decline in population. Population decline resulted in lower sales for commercial establishments, lowering employment even further. What the economic conditions do not fully explain is much of the recent investment in the surrounding counties and the simultaneous decline in Chester.

With so much available industrial land in Chester, why were smaller industrial parks developed elsewhere in the county? With the level of sophistication and experience within county economic development agencies, why does Chester, which contains over 9% of the county's population, continue to lag behind the county in investment? Between 1982 and 1987 the number of business in Delaware County rose 32.4% while the number of businesses in Chester declined by 9%. Even within selected business types, we find Delaware county growing and Chester declining. For example between 1982 and 1987 the number of hotels in Delaware county grew by 10.3%, in Chester they declined by 50% (from 2 hotels to 1). In recreation the number of establishments in Delaware County grew by 67.9%, in Chester they declined by 50%. Health services increased in Delaware county by 20% and decreased in Chester by 16.7%. This thesis attempts to answer this question of uneven investment among others.

¹ cited in Urban Revitalization Plan; East Side Caucus; Chester, PA; 1986;

Although Chester's employment base (manufacturing in heavy industry) and population have been declining since World War Two; coupled with the fact that the overall picture of investment has focused on the wealthier burrows of Delaware County, there are several planners within the city and Delaware County who believe that Chester's turnaround is inevitable. The county, in particular, has not let the potential of Chester's location (which is along the Delaware River, midway between Philadelphia and Wilmington, Delaware, and at the nexus of three major highways) go unnoticed. With differing levels of aggressiveness at different times during the past decade, the county has sought to position itself to take advantage of the speculative value of Chester's waterfront by sponsoring development projects and seeking to control the direction of development in the city.

Even with Chester lagging behind the rest of Delaware county, the apparent potential in Chester's location and the desire by local citizens to improve their plight , development (particularly community-based development) is presently in a state of inertia. Community-based organizations and their funders, disappointed by repeated failures and overwhelmed by a plethora of social problems, have turned their energies inward and concentrated their efforts on housing and social issues such as education.

This thesis attempts to understand what has brought Chester to this current state and to suggest what might be done to change the path of economic and civic decline by breathing new life into economic development efforts. It examines historical, political, and social influences that have brought city, and community-based efforts to an impasse. It draws on theories of economic development and community revitalization to provide an explanation of the current dynamics and explain the underlying logic of the perceptions and visions of key players.

THEORY

The thesis starts from the theoretical framework of Ross Gittell, and then amplifies and extends that framework by drawing on the work of Mel King. Finally, drawing on the case study from this thesis, the author adds to these theories her own concept of a social movement.

Ross Gittell provides us with characteristics of mid-sized industrial cities that have successfully implemented economic development strategies. Using the Gittell characteristics provides a static analysis; an initial first cut for understanding Chester's inability to implement an economic

development strategy. The Gittell characteristics are drawn from Gittell's doctoral work which is based on two paired case studies of medium sized industrial cities. The pairs share very similar economic histories. Gittell uses economic base and shift share analysis to account for the economic effects of each city's decline.

One of the cities in each pair successfully implemented an economic development strategy. The other two were less successful. Based on these comparisons, Gittell comes up with an extensive list of factors that characterize cities that are successful at economic development. The characteristics include strong local leadership, competent local development agencies, some system of balancing or mediating between various interest groups, an inclusive community vision to motivate the citizenry, a history as well as social and political culture that are conducive to development efforts. I will expand on these characteristics in Chapter One.

What we will find in the case of Chester is that many of Chester's key players believe that several of the Gittell characteristics are critical. However, the Gittell factors tell only a small part of the story. Gittell does not explain what may be behind the lack of factors in any city. Furthermore, the Gittell factors do not address the imbalance of power that exists between a city like Chester and a more powerful county government (which is represented in this case by the Delaware County Republican machine).

To address the issues surrounding power imbalances, community control literature (as expressed in the work of Mel King and Marie Kennedy) and the author's social movement concept are used to provide a more dynamic analysis of the historical events, as well as the current actions, policies, and perceptions that continue to contribute to an impasse in economic development.

King provides a developmental model --- the stage theory of community development, which illustrates the stages in a community's struggles toward human, economic, and political development. Kennedy points out tradeoffs that must be made when choosing a transformative model of development that makes community control and social change a priority over tangible development products. The social movement concept focuses on a sense of momentum and continuity in protest, planning, and implementation which is implied in King's stage theory but is not explicit.

What we shall see is that underlying the apparent lack of Gittell factors, the historical analysis, and current perceptions of key players are a series of conflicts that have prevented Chester from moving smoothly through the King stages, leaving Chester's development at an impasse. We shall see in the following chapters that the lack of an inclusive community vision, the lack of leadership, and the lack of a competent local development agency can be traced to a history of conflict between the community and city versus the county, the community versus the county, and the fragmentation of community based efforts to revitalize Chester.

DATA

With the exception of Anna Squarrel-Jenkin's analysis of leadership in Chester's black community, there is very little academic literature on Chester. Therefore historical and background data was compiled from a number of additional sources. Documentary sources include various planning documents, written transcripts from public hearing testimonies, program evaluations and reports, organizational brochures, grant applications, and newspaper articles.

Interviews with principles involved in projects and programs provided additional historical background as well as their perspective on economic development in Chester.

SYNOPSIS OF CHAPTERS

Chapter One reviews some of the recent academic discourse on community revitalization. It places the work of Ross Gittell within the historical debate regarding the relevance of analyzing economic development at the local level. Gittell's dissertation is based on in-depth comparative case studies of four medium-sized industrial cities. His conclusions suggest certain characteristics of cities that successfully implement economic development strategies.

An in-depth review of one of Gittell's four case studies, the Monongahela (Mon) Valley, is included because of its many parallels to Chester. One parallel in particular is the history of competition between the localities and the county to control the direction of development. I have chosen to highlight the Mon Valley case because in Gittell's analysis of the case, he does not fully explore the impact of the imbalance of power between the two levels of government --- illustrating a shortcoming in his analysis. This paper will explain the ramifications of that imbalance of

power. To explore these ramifications, I will draw on community control literature.

Community control literature contributes another dimension of understanding to the Chester experience. This literature explores the tension between the goal of empowerment through citizen control of economic development versus the desire to quickly obtain tangible economic benefits. The later option requires relinquishing a considerable amount of control to a higher level of government. This tension is evident in the Mon Valley case study and it is critical to the understanding of the impasse of development in Chester.

Chapter Two, History of Political and Economic Development, studies the development of an unbalanced power relationship between the city and the county and how that imbalance has impacted and continues to impact economic development in Chester. This chapter examines the lack of accountability of elected officials to the citizenry, in particular the black community. We will also look at the historical events that explain the dearth in leadership within Chester's black community. Chapter Two documents the current state of economic development and discusses the absence of a social movement to guide local development efforts.

We will see in this chapter, that Delaware County's more powerful position enables the county to isolate the city's political leadership, control the direction of development from behind the scenes, and influence the perception of the city to outside investors and funders. By doing these things, the Delaware County Republican machine contributes to the impasse in economic development.

Chapter Three, Key Players, reveals what local planners (broadly defined), county development agencies, and regional funders believe are the most critical factors limiting Chester's revitalization. This chapter also discusses the visions these various actors have for a revitalized Chester.

In this chapter, I compare the picture that interviewees paint of Chester with Gittell's characteristics of cities that are similar to Chester that have successfully implemented economic development strategies. Given Chester's history and background, I use community control literature and what I call the social movement concept to fill in where Gittell's analysis falls short of explaining interviewee perceptions and the reality of Chester's impasse in economic development.

Chapter Four, Review, Analysis, Conclusions, and Recommendations, reviews the findings of Chapters Two and Three in light of the theory and concepts discussed in Chapter One, analyzes the state of impasse by focusing on the issues of conflict presented in Chapters Two and Three, and offers suggestions for how Chester might get beyond the current state of impasse.

CHAPTER ONE

RECENT ACADEMIC DISCOURSE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION STRATEGIES

In the latter half of the 1980's, many progressive planners were up in arms in response to City Limits, a liberal treatise on urban economic development by Paul Peterson. In that book, Peterson described the forces of the market and national policy as virtually omnipotent. From his conclusions, one could infer that there was little that cities could do or would do to shape their own economic destiny.

Scores of planners were quick to respond to Peterson's argument, noting that factors political, social, institutional, and individual could not be counted out in explaining the success of some cities to revitalize their centers. Many also tried to extend this analysis to the neighborhood level. Some of Peterson's critics were armed with sociological, political science, and organizational theory. Others put forth case studies as an arsenal against Peterson's seemingly presbyopic² view of the decline and subsequent rebirth of some cities.

Whereas Peterson focuses on the limits of local action within the context of national economic trends and federal policy, Lisa Peattie (1980) points out that planning which is directed towards social change must be understood at the local, neighborhood, institutional, or individual level.

"implementation [of plans] is embedded in political social processes and deals with, if it does not actually collude with, important vested interests. Thus the practice of [a progressive, change oriented] approach will tend to be kept to the lower level of things, outside the central planning, national development strategy level."

In Space for Progressive Local Policy (1989), Clavel and Kleiwenski document an increase and variety of progressive local policy since the 1970's. Clavel and Kleiwenski attribute the spread of local policy to increased national and international networking. What Peterson's argument seems to have missed, Clavel and Kleiwenski seem to suggest, is the potential for cumulative effects of local action on the national economy and national public policy.

Peter Doeringer et al take up the argument with Peterson on his own turf, that of the profit-maximizing firm. In Invisible Factors of Development (1987), Doeringer points out the role of management and innovation in

² not able to see close up; opposite of myopic

determining regional and national growth. More importantly, Doeringer argued that government can play a role in influencing growth by giving firms incentives to implement progressive management policies and incentives to promote innovation.

Ross Gittell picks up on the work of Doeringer and systematically examines the factors influencing revitalization. Gittell accounts for economic effects by using measurements such as economic base and shift share components.³ In addition to economic factors, Gittell examines individual leadership and the capacity of local development agencies.

USING GITTELL AS AN INITIAL THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

I have used the doctoral work of Ross Gittell as the initial organizing framework for the analysis of Chester institutions and actors in its revitalization process. Gittell's dissertation is based on paired case studies of medium-sized industrial cities. One city in each pair successfully implemented an economic development strategy. The other city was less successful. From these comparisons, Gittell makes conclusions about which factors are characteristic of cities that successfully implement economic development strategies.

Gittell's conclusions are not tightly woven into a theoretical model, nor does he point out which factors are most crucial to success. This makes the factors difficult to summarize, but I will attempt to categorize them as they are relevant to the analysis in the remainder of this document. According to Gittell's studies, medium-sized industrial towns are successful at initiating revitalization strategies if they have the following:

strong local leadership

the ability to motivate the local citizenry and the ability to influence and get resources from higher levels of government and other regionally based sources (such as large foundations)

competent local development agencies

the ability to identify and address problems and opportunities in local development. This includes analytical capacity to identify economic c trends and the ability to package financial deals

some system of balancing or mediating between various interest groups

This can take on a variety of organizational forms, such as public/private partnerships or convening institutions that

³ For a fuller discussion of these economic factors and their impact on revitalization, see Gittell's unpublished thesis, A Critical Analysis of Local Initiatives, Harvard University, 1989

balance or simultaneously address elite (or private business) as well as non-elite concerns; alternatively, the simple existence of well organized institutions that represent both elite and non-elite concerns

a vision to motivate the citizenry to believe in the possibility of the community's revitalization

Such a vision must be a broad-based conception of economic development including issues such as housing, education, and health care. This vision should generate a positive community psychology, where citizenry believe that revitalization is possible

the community's history, and its political and social culture
community psychology, which is shaped by past experiences, is an important determinant of development capacity. For example, past urban renewal programs can be responsible for creating a sense of hope and a desire among citizens to want to improve continue to improve their community or it can lead to bitter disappointment, leaving citizens distrustful of large scale government-sponsored programs.

What we find in the case of Chester is that even though Chester's key players believe that several of the Gittell characteristics are critical to Chester's revitalization, many of the Gittell factors are non-existent. However, the Gittell factors only tell a small part of the story. Gittell's list does not tell why the factors do not exist in Chester. Furthermore, Gittell's factors do not address the imbalance of power that exists between Chester and the Delaware County Republican machine.

Without understanding why this imbalance exists, we might be led to believe that the simple addition of several Gittell factors is all that is necessary for development. An in-depth understanding of the historical, political and social factors reveals the more fundamental changes that are necessary. In fact, one of Gittell's own case studies, the Monongahela Valley, points to a similar need for fundamental political change as a precondition for development.

The Mon Valley Case Study

The Monongahela (Mon) Valley case study is instructive because of its similarities with the Chester experience. The case focuses on revitalization efforts in eight communities in the lower half of the valley. They are located within a 10 mile stretch of the Monongahela River. By the mid 1980's these communities experienced extensive economic dislocation and an accompanying decline in population due to the decline in the steel industry. (Gittell 1988)

Like Chester, the Mon Valley communities are located in a politically

powerful county with proven experience in economic development. Allegheny County has been the conduit for economic development funds since the early 1950's.⁴ The county's newest development entity, the Mon Valley Commission, like the Delaware County Economic Development Oversight Board and its member agencies, does not have strong representation or influence from local officials.

The answer to the imbalance of power in this case was the establishment of the Mon Valley Development Team. This development team was funded by the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC). Its purpose was to circumvent an ineffective local government as well as to facilitate the creation of locally-based organizational human capacity in the Valley. Goals of MVDT were to mobilize friendly public and private resources, use organizers to identify local leadership and assist local communities in organizing CDC's, development project ideas and implement them.⁵

At the writing of the case study it was too early to make definitive conclusions on the success of MVDT. Even Gittell questioned MVDT's ability to compete with the county for control of the direction of development in the Valley.⁶ However, MVDT's preliminary successes in engaging citizens around development issues were hopeful.

The Mon Valley case illustrates that without an analysis of the power dynamics between city and county, the success of prescriptions are uncertain. This analysis is needed to reveal the tradeoffs and priorities that must be made when embarking on a development strategy that is intended not only to produce tangible economic benefits but to empower the citizenry to control development in their communities. I will argue that the Chester case calls for such an analysis.

STAGE DEVELOPMENT AND TRANSFORMATIVE THEORY HIGHLIGHTS THE TRADEOFFS BETWEEN COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT AND TANGIBLE ECONOMIC BENEFITS

Gittell's analysis overlooks power imbalances, but there is another development literature that focuses on this issue --- the stage theory of community development and transformative theory which are exemplified in

⁴ Gittell, Ross; "Struggling to Survive; Efforts to Revitalize the Monongahela Valley"; Center for Business & Government Community Revitalization Project; Harvard University, 1988, p9

⁵ *ibid*, p 103

⁶ *ibid*; pp 109 - 111

the work of Mel King and Marie Kennedy. The King and Kennedy literatures are particularly designed for poor and disenfranchised communities and propose that community controled development is not only the preferred, but the more appropriate vehicle for economic and human development in these communities.

Mel King's Chain of Change (1981) provides the basis of the stage theory of community development. This book draws on the struggles of Boston's black community. Through their struggles, activists discovered that the only way to insure equitable and empowering development is for the community to control development decisions through control of the land.

King's theory of development is organized into 3 stages --- the service stage, the organizing stage, and the institution-building stage. A community is at the service stage when it has a negative self image and it is dependent on outside missionary-like institutions. During the organizing stage the community works together to make institutions more responsive community needs. The accompanying psychology during this stage is the recognition that community members are deserving of government and social services. During this stage, the community begins to gain power through their collective actions. Finally, the demand for access to institutions leads the community to question the institutions, realizing differences in values with the dominant institutions and beginning to realize the necessity of creating indigenous institutions.

These three stages of development, as they are reflected in King's work, are given momentum and coherence because they are driven by an underlying social movement --- the movement for empowerment and self-determination. The existence of an underlying social movement to guide development is important to maintaining momentum. The movement links (or rationalizes) political and development activities so that they complement and reinforce each other.

The central role of a social movment points to a set of guidelines for community development. From the general to the specific, all planning all projects, all of our work as planners should be directed towards furthering the goals of the community's movement, King and Kennedy argue.

The movement defines the vision and gives rationale to all parts of the whole:

"We must develop a full-scale vision of where we want to be so that every individual, every group, can see clearly how their

work fits into the whole and contributes to the full resolution of the issues which are shaping our times. Otherwise we will continue to work in fragmented cells, unable to draw sustenance from each other and unable to see the ultimate goals." (King 1981)

Economic development projects should embody the goals of the movement. Here King (1981) gives an example:

"One of the outstanding features of the NECDC Concentrated Economic Development Program was its insistence from the beginning the programs be designed to lead to complete community control."

The daily work that we do as planners within those institutions should embody those goals as well:

"technical assistance should be framed in relationship to people's movements in order to build those movements."⁷

Gaining political influence is an integral part of the community's development. Here King describes its importance and the role it played in the intermediary organization stage:

"Whether in education, employment or housing, the Black community became increasingly aware that no appreciable changes could be made without gaining political power in the city and the state." (pg 79)

The goals of economic development should never be separated from political organization. In Boston, the black community incorporated the lessons learned from the 1960s into the political platform of the Black United Front in 1969. That platform lists "control of the land" and "control of politics" as the first and second goals. (King 1981)

The stage theory of community development implies a certain chronology. The community must be organized before institutions are built or projects are embarked upon. Herein is the dilemma facing all distressed communities that seek empowerment as one of their goals. It follows from the stage theory that tangible economic development goals must at times be subordinated to the organizing needs or human development needs of the community. Marie Kennedy's observation (1980) illustrates the difficulty, especially for planners, in subordinating tangible benefits to the community's control over development decisions.

"As a planner, its hard for me to arrive at that point. I've been trained to do products. We planners and organizers have to get clear that community development isn't simply, or even primarily about achieving so many products."

⁷ Kennedy, Marie; "Lessons from Community Planning in Boston"; presented at the Socialist Scholars Conference; New York, NY; April 10, 1988

THE SOCIAL MOVEMENT CONCEPT

The social movement concept is a slightly different take on King's stage theory of community development. It differs from King's theory in that it focuses on a sense of momentum and a sense of continuity which I think is implied in King's work but is not explicit. The concept borrows from Gittell in that it places critical value on understanding a community's history. After all, it is a community's history that determines the presence or absence of a sense of continuity.

A social movement requires continuity between actions that activists pursue to achieve a set of goals (or a vision). The concept does not imply that all actions move forward to achieve the desired ends but that the activists intend that those actions should be directed towards achieving those ends. Therefore, there is a certain consciousness and direction in protests, planning, institution building, and program implementation. When those actions fail, actors reevaluate, re-plan and strategize with the same level of consciousness and sense of purpose.

The analysis of Chester in this thesis combines the two sets of literatures represented by Gittell on the one hand and King and Kennedy on the other. The King and Kennedy literatures are supplemented by the social movement concept. Gittell provides us with an initial set of factors to look for in determining why Chester has been unsuccessful at implementing an economic development strategy. King provides us with a developmental model to compare with the historical events surrounding Chester's attempts at community revitalization. Kennedy forces us to consider the implications of choosing a path that prioritizes community control and social change over tangible development products. The social movement concept gives us a prescriptive way for evaluating activist efforts in the context of larger political and economic forces, building on the prescriptions offered by King and Kennedy.

Chester's historical development and the resulting political conditions are placed at the center of the analysis. We shall see that the power structure, as it is expressed in the political realm, affects the structure and capacity of development agencies and contributes to the vacuum in local leadership. Finally, the absence of a social movement helps explain the nature of interaction of community-based planners with the local government and the larger power structure of the county political machine.

CHAPTER TWO

HISTORY OF POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The history of Chester's political and economic development begins my analysis of local relationships between people, groups, and institutions. By studying these local relationships, not only do we learn that national trends are not sufficient to explain Chester's fate but we get at the roots of the conflicts between the city and community versus the county, the community versus the city, and the fragmentation of community-based efforts at local economic development.

In this chapter, we will look at the history of a) Republican party politics in Chester and the County, b) the county's role in Chester's economic development, and c) the history of community based development. Finally, we will find that the failure to resolve many of the recurrent conflicts in this history derives from d) the historical development of leadership roles in Chester's Black community.

The development of Republican party politics in Chester and the county is at the source of conflict that existed and continues to exist between the Chester community and city government versus the surrounding county. The history of Republican Party politics in Chester is a case study in the resistance of vested interests --- namely white Chesterites who moved out of Chester and into the county, and the Republican power structure --- to the influence of non-whites on the communal life, and the economic and political realms of Chester.

The recent history of the county's role in Chester's economy shows us that the county's efforts to control Chester politics and development from behind the scenes have resulted in conflict with the local government. The conflict is further complicated by Chester's reputation for corruption, the resulting distrust among the citizenry, as well as the county's lack of respect for the sovereignty of Chester's local government.

The history of development by community-based organizations, activists (I interchangeably refer to these two groups as "the community") and local government reveals conflicts between the community versus local government and its development agency. This conflict is rooted in the lack of accountability that government officials feel to its citizens.

The history of black Chesterites in the economic, political, and social

spheres helps to explain the apparent dearth in leadership emanating from the black community. The history of leadership development in black Chester reveals the source of fragmentation among community-based efforts as well as the source of conflict between the community and city officials.

REPUBLICAN PARTY POLITICS: CHESTER AND THE COUNTY

The history of Republican Party politics in Chester and the county is a case study in vested interests' successful effort to maintain control of Chester politics and its economy throughout the changes caused by the influx of blacks into the Chester economy and political arena. The effort involved a change in the structure of political power which enabled white Chesterites living outside the city to control political offices and the Chester economy from outside the city limits.

The change in the structure of political power in Delaware county and Chester's position within that power system begins with the exodus of white citizens to the surrounding burroughs during the 1950's. In her PHD dissertation, Anna Squarrel-Jenkins (1984) noted that "although whites were moving out of Chester to the growing housing developments being built for them around the city, they still lived nearby and [throughout that decade] they continued to dominate the working segment of the economic sectors of the city." (p 166)

This observation is supported by census data. In 1950, only 25% of the workforce lived within the city limits. Between 1950 and 1960, 16,500 whites left Chester and 42,000 non-whites entered. By 1980, Chester residents still made up only 39% of the workers in Chester firms. The remaining 61% were commuters.⁸

During the 1950's, the population of the suburbs was growing at such a rate that Delaware County political boss and Chester native John McClure recognized that it was necessary to set up a "separate but complementary and symbiotic [political] structure" [in the suburbs].⁹

No one in Chester was more influential than John McClure. His political career spanned over 75 years. In a Daily Times obituary, the much revered

⁸ RPM Systems, Local Economy Inventory for Chester; Emmaus, PA; 1984;p16

⁹ from an interview with the late Arthur Early, a state representative from Chester ; Squarrels-Jenkins (1984)

machine boss power was described thusly:

Chester was his stronghold --- his castle --- and the county was his fief"

Ironically, because of the deliberate actions of John McClure, Chester eventually began to lose its power and prestige within county politics. A Daily Times retrospective of McClure's career mentions that in 1963, after recently recovering from a long hospitalization, McClure sought to reestablish his power with a newly found vigor and vengeance. In 1963, he "launched an offensive aimed at destroying district leaders whose combined power posed a threat to his control of the county ... McClure ordered a reassignment of political [appointments] aimed at redistricting certain leaders out of their political power". Among these leaders was Joseph L. Eyre, mayor of Chester.¹⁰ Since McClure's last stand, local Chester politicians have not been able to hold power independently of the county political machine.

As the white population moved out into the county, powerful institutions that are important to economic development followed the populace. In the 1970's, the Chester Times moved to Media and became the Delaware County Daily Times. Today, the County Chamber of Commerce has succeeded the Chester Businessmen's Association as the preferred vehicle for networking and community status for the remaining businesses in Chester.

Changes were not limited to the relocation of important institutions. In January of 1976, Delaware County established a home rule charter. The significance of home rule is that it confers considerable power and responsibility on the home rule locality. Delaware County has many of the same powers as a larger city, including a strong county council.

Even as employment waned and important institutions moved out to the county, Chester remained and continues to remain important to county politics. Chester contains a significant, concentrated percentage of the county's population, giving it potential power in the state house. Also, many business minded Delaware County residents believe that Chester contains potential or at least surplus economic resources --- namely cheap labor and land.

By the 1980's, the face of Chester's local government had changed. The change however was in appearance only. New black political leaders,

¹⁰ Delaware County Daily Times, December 8, 1963

including current Mayor Willie Mae James Leake, are all Republicans. However, suspicion still abounds¹¹ that Chester is still controlled by former mayor, county party boss, and convicted felon Nick Nacrelli. What the Republican party left in Chester was a legacy of patronage and corruption.

The city's one development agency, the Chester Redevelopment Authority (CRA) is all too susceptible to political influence by the mayor and city council. The CRA, unlike many Redevelopment Authorities, is an administrative arm of the city. All development decisions as well as budget approvals for development projects must go through city council. Questionable development decisions by the CRA were cited as early as 1978 in a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) assessment report.

The county continues to control Chester politics from behind the scenes by insuring that the city is run by Republican candidates. The Republican machine rewards these candidates by insulating them from their constituency but the party does not give them access to the larger Republican power structure. The county needs to maintain control over the city and at the same time it is embarrassed by its reputation for corruption. This is reflected in the comments of the late Arthur Early, state representative from Chester.

"Chester is like a festering sore on a prize cow's rump. Whether you cut it off or try to treat it, you take a chance on ruining the cow." (Squarrel-Jenkins 1984)

THE COUNTY'S ROLE IN CHESTER'S ECONOMY

In addition to controlling city politics, the county has also tried to control the direction of development in Chester so that it would serve the county's economic interests. As is the case in politics, the county's relationship with the city is a complex one. The county's behavior towards Chester within the context of economic development is an extension of Early's festering sore analogy. Not desiring to cut political ties with the city, and not willing to take responsibility for the city's economic welfare, Delaware County has engaged in policies that combine

¹¹ Newspaper articles often mention that Mayor Leake was Nacrelli's former secretary. Other local officials are also mentioned as being part of the Nacrelli cabinet. These suspicions were also mentioned in my interview with James Brunswick and substantiated by other interviewees who wished not to be identified.

behind-the-scenes control and benign neglect.¹²

In response to the ambivalent behavior of the county, the city reacted in ways that are often hard to predict -- sometimes identifying with the county proposals and at other times resisting them. Thus, for example, the city followed of the county's policy to support the expansion of the stratagic route, 291, but fought the county over the proposed trash to steam plant. As we shall see in a later section, this enigmatic behavior results from city officials' isolation from the Republican party power structure on the one hand, and officials' lack of accountability to the citizens of Chester on the other.

In the remainder of this section, we will examine the nature of the county's involvement in Chester's economy and the city's reactions to the county's involvement in Chester's economy.

The county's involvement in Chester's economy over the past ten years has been sporadic. The county's behavior is reflective of an non-reciprocal relationship in which the county views Chester as an economic resource but does not feel responsible for the city's welfare.

Inquiries into current economic development efforts in the city elicited responses ranging from ridicule to flippancy from some representatives from county institutions. But at the same time, many comments by county economic development planners, as well as some city planners, suggested that they view Chester as an economic resource. Most agreed that Chester's location makes its turnaround inevitable. One revealing comment by an unidentified interviewee was that "Chester's best selling asset was its depression." In other words, the more Chester declined the more attractive it would be to investors. He went on to predict that "Once the land along 291 is all developed, Chester will be a hot property."¹³ You won't be able to pick up a property this cheap for the taxes alone."

Chester's location as a transportation nexus is important to county and regional growth. In Chester, three major highways meet near the proposed exit ramp off of Route 291. Much commercial and industrial development is

¹² Chester interviewees noted exeptions in the work of the Delaware County Community Action Agency and the social programs of the county Chamber of Commerce

¹³ Route 291 is along the waterfront where a lot of redevelopment is being planned throughout the county

anticipated along these highways. Chester is close to the Philadelphia Metropolitan Airport and it is also one of the few areas in Delaware County where industrial land is still available. Since 1981, the County Chamber of Commerce, in cooperation with the county planning department and the regional planning commission, pushed the development of Route 291 and continues to support those objectives.¹⁴

The county's current tax policies affect investment in Chester. Investment in housing may be significantly retarded because real estate taxes are considerably higher, relative to elsewhere in the county. County property tax assessments in Chester are not proportional to housing values. A person who owns a \$20,000 house in Chester will pay up to twice the tax rate of the owner of a \$100,000 house in the more affluent burroughs. High taxes are a deterrent to homeownership for lower and middle income people in Chester. This problem must be addressed at the county level, but county officials have not been receptive to this policy because such a change would result in a relative tax rate increase for the homeowners of more expensive housing elsewhere in the county.¹⁵

The city shares the county's view, in principle, that Chester's turnaround is inevitable and have supported policies to expand industrial development. Because the city also benefits from the inflated tax policy by getting much needed revenues, it is also resistant to changing the tax structure in Chester. However, Chester officials resent the county not taking a more proactive and cooperative role in Chester's development. Willie Mae Wells, executive director of Chester's Redevelopment Authority said, "The county can no longer treat us like a stepchild. We are part of the county and it must begin to address some of our concerns."

The county has used Chester's low income population as a resource for county economic development, allowing the county to qualify for state and federal funds. However, a 1977 assessment of CDBG programs questioned whether county boroughs' use of CDBG funds was legitimate, and noted that "it cannot be denied that the record [of the county] to date demonstrates an unwillingness to tackle projects directly eliminating blight or serving

¹⁴ Based on conversation with Chris Franklin of the County Chamber of Commerce and testimony of the county council to the PA Dept of Transportation, Jan 31, 1991

¹⁵ Chester Community Improvement Project; "Chester Assessment Project"; 1989

the immediate needs of the low/moderate income groups."¹⁶

From the county's vantage point, countywide and regional goals of growth have often taken precedent over the development of human capital and local Chester businesses. In no instance is this more apparent than in the competition over two development projects in the mid 1980's. The acquisition and development of the Riverbridge site allowed the county to gain technical expertise in economic development as well as to control a sizable piece of land in Chester. In the second project, a trash to steam plant, struggles between the county and city over Chester's economic development came to a head.

Riverbridge

The acquisition and development of the Riverbridge site allowed county development agencies to cut their teeth on economic development. The county acquired the site from the city of Chester in the early eighties, after the city's several failed attempts at developing the site.

Shortly after the county's purchase, an Austrian roofing company expressed an interest in acquiring some property for development of a plant in Chester, less than a mile away from the Riverbridge site. The negotiation process between the city and the Austrian investor was long and drawn out; as the city attempted to extract improvements for sites adjacent to the property from the Roofing company. These improvements were far in excess of any potential impact that the new development would have on the adjacent properties. Just when the Austrian entrepreneur was about to consider another site, Delaware County's economic development specialist suggested the Riverbridge site.¹⁷ The county and the Austrian company worked out an agreement, shutting out the city. This Austrian company, Tar Mac Roofing, (now an English company) has developed a new roofing technology and is expanding in several international markets.

The Riverbridge site currently houses, in addition to Tar Mac roofing, four large tenants and several smaller tenants and there is still developable land on the site. The county is currently debating whether to invest in the dilapidated pier adjacent to the site. Since the

¹⁶ Community Development Block Grant Program: An Analysis of its Impact in Delaware County; published by the Health and Welfare Council, Inc., Delaware County Area Office; 1977; p36

¹⁷ interview with Al Hilbert, Manager of the Riverbridge Site

Riverbridge acquisition, the county's Industrial Development Corporation (IDC) has gone on to successfully develop other sites elsewhere in the county. Although IDC is currently losing money on the project they own a sizable piece of industrial land within city limits. The acquisition of the Riverbridge site set the stage for a far more dramatic encounter between the city and the county --- the battle over the trash to steam plant.

Trash to Steam Plant

From its beginning, the trash to steam project was an uphill battle for the city. In the mid-1980's, the city wanted to condemn waterfront property owned by the politically influential Pennsylvania Electric Company (PECO)¹⁸ in order to site a waste resource facility. The city eventually lost its battle with PECO and on June 25th 1987, Mayor Leake announced a new site the trash to steam plant. City officials rested their hopes on an agreement with the city of Philadelphia to burn 1000 daily tons of Philadelphia trash.

Shortly after after losing their battle with PECO and moving the proposed site, the city was busy complying with investigations over city bidding practices for the demolition of the new site, and defending itself against allegations from the county courthouse over the legality of the issuance of bonds for the plant by a Wall Street financial house. County officials publicly denounced this ill-fated venture in the County Times which further humiliated Mayor Leake.

Day after day, the Times' articles criticized Leake's no-bid contracting practices which resulted in her choice of a local black contractor to demolish the new site, her choice of a former aide to head the newly created Waste Resource Authority, and the investigations of the Wall Street financial firm which handled the industrial development bonds for the facility. Leake's weariness at battling the county was beginning to show in a statement she made to a Daily Times reporter on June 23, 1987:

"It's almost [as] if they're preying on a city like Chester which so badly needs a break"

While the city's competence and ethics in carrying out the project are questionable, it is difficult to argue that the tactics the county used in

¹⁸ PECO is represented on the board of the county Chamber of Commerce and is currently working in cooperation with the Economic Development Oversight Board to recruit companies for sites along the proposed expansion of Route 291.

securing its own trash to steam venture on the Riverbridge site were any less underhanded. On June 27, 1987 the County Times announced a joint venture between Westinghouse and Delaware County. Because the announcement was such a short time after Leake's announcement to move the site, the negotiations must have been taking place well in advance of the announcement. The venture team offered a proposal to accept 1000 tons daily of Philadelphia's trash, trash that had been agreed that would go to the Chester plant. The Philadelphia trash was crucial to the financial and economic feasibility of the Chester plant. Leake's reaction to the announcement was one of shock and anger.

An advertising battle for the two projects ensued over the next several weeks in the county paper. The Westinghouse ad claimed that Chester would receive millions of dollars in host community fees from the Westinghouse/Delaware County Plant. County officials were quoted as saying that Chester would be crazy not to take this offer. In response, Leake argued that the Delaware County plant would not be as beneficial for Chester residents as a Chester owned plant.

Currently the Westinghouse plant is proceeding according to schedule. The city argues that their plant is more environmentally sound. Nevertheless, the bond money for the project is practically gone. Furthermore, the city of Philadelphia has reneged on its commitment to supplying tonnage for the Chester plant. The likelihood of the Chester plant going forward at this point is slim while the Westinghouse plant has received a commitment for tonnage from Philadelphia.¹⁹

The inability of Chester to maintain control over the trash to steam project might be blamed on its inexperience in economic development. However, one could interpret the venture as the city's effort to gain experience in creating an economic development project. The scandal surrounding Leake's hiring of a local minority contractor is not unlike the debates over affirmative action in other urban cities. It is interesting to contemplate what might have happened if the city were not as vulnerable to its reputation for patronage. Also newspaper interviews revealed that the project lacked widespread support from the citizenry. If Chester's black resident's had recognized city officials as legitimate leaders, and had seen the project as part of a larger and more inclusive vision for the rebirth of Chester, citizens might have provided enough

¹⁹ See Philadelphia Inquirer; March, 1991

support to allow the city to maintain control over these projects.

THE HISTORY OF COMMUNITY-BASED DEVELOPMENT

Community-based efforts in the 1980s began as a response to development controlled or influenced by the county. As the battles between the county and the city unfolded, community activists (aided by their friends in the foundations and other regional funders) redirected their focus away from opposition to county-influenced development to an ongoing struggle with the city's.

Early community-based efforts were not successful at challenging the city's leadership. This is due, in part, to the fragmentation of community based efforts. In this section we will look at three community-based projects; the East Side Caucus, the Chester Regeneration Project, and Common Ground. We shall see that in each project, efforts failed because these efforts were not guided by a social movement; this resulted in fragmentation. We also look at a new effort directed at redressing some of the mistakes made in earlier community based efforts --- the Chester Organizing Project. We will explore the source of fragmentation in the last section, Leadership in the Black Community.

Early Resistance to Development

According to community based planning documents and interviews with city and community planners, community residents were successful at blocking plans for high-tech industrial development along the proposed Route 291 during the early 1980s.²⁰ This project was one in a series of proposals that had county support for development along the waterfront. Two community-based development projects, the East Side Caucus and The Chester Regeneration Project were, in part, a response to county-controlled development. Unfortunately, the reaction was never redefined a self propelled social movement. Rather than building a social movement to guide development efforts, these projects concentrated more heavily on production and technical proficiency than on building a grassroots base or developing leadership.

The East Side Caucus

In 1985, RDC Inc -- a county-based non-profit agency established for the

²⁰ Unfortunately, planning documents do not detail this struggle, nor did I uncover the details of this struggle during my interviews.

promotion of economic development in Delaware County²¹ -- presented the Pew Charitable Trusts with a proposal to initiate a high-tech development project along the city's industrial waterfront. The RDC proposal lacked significant community involvement. As a result, The Conservation Company (as a consultant for the Pew Trusts) created the East Side Caucus from representatives of community organizations, youth organizations and the religious community. ESC summed up what it believed to be the problem of previous development projects:

"Past plans developed by the Chester Group, the Riverfront Development Corporation²² and others, while well conceived, failed to incorporate the full range of common interests and concerns. Community leaders on the East Side feel that their involvement in the planning process has been token. As a result, plans to move forward have been effectively resisted and blocked by the residents who would be adversely affected by development projects."²³

The Conservation Company, Pew, and others intended for the ESC to be a "strong, stable community-based organization" that sought to "make the revitalization of the East Side a major initiative in the revitalization of the City of Chester as a whole."²⁴

Although the East Side Caucus began with a vision and the potential to be the spring board of a social movement, it never became more than a somewhat isolated project between concerned citizens and institutions in Chester. Christina Klugar, former program officer of the Pew Trusts, observed that the caucus was never a real partnership between community groups and concerned citizens of Chester, with representation from government and private industry. She blames the failure of building the partnership on Pew's lack of active involvement in the project. It appears that the failure resulted, in part, because local leadership was

²¹ RDC, Inc. whose recent history in Chester started without considering community participation, is now reevaluating its role in the city of Chester. RDC is currently the contractor for the city's revision of its comprehensive master plan. It is an organization that is technically competent in economic development. In its early history was more closely aligned to the county.

²² The Chester Group was originally an alliance between two organizations with a regional focus, PECO and Widener College; both institutions currently sit on the board of the county Chamber of Commerce. The Chester Group later became the Riverfront Development Corporation

²³ Urban Revitalization Plan and Proposal: East Side Caucus, Inc, City of Chester, Pa; 1986; pI

²⁴ *ibid*; pIII

not developed, skill building was not done, and broad-based community participation was never implemented as part of the project --- all the components necessary if a large scale planning project is to become an integral part of a social movement. A closer look at the details of ESC's history demonstrates that all these components were missing.

For example, finding local leadership was a problem from the very beginning. While there were many concerned citizens, few felt there was a local person capable of running a complex organization, such as that which ESC was designed to be. Two concerned East Side residents, Bernice Burton and her husband, were the most active in the organization and took on leadership roles in the beginning. However, the search for an executive director was a long one. Finally Charles Grandeson -- a private black developer who had done projects in Philadelphia, Wilmington, and Florida -- was selected.

The choice of Grandeson turned out to be an ill-fated one. Accounts from several observers revealed that Grandeson seemed more interested in following his own pursuits than in developing a community-based organization. The result of Grandeson's leadership was that ESC had a heavy emphasis on housing development.

As for community participation, the East Side Caucus' Revitalization Plan included a wide range of community projects whose activities included:

- * Cooperative and Homeownership Opportunity Program
- * New Businesses for Chester (an entrepreneurial training program)
- * Food Co-Op
- * Block Beautification Program
- * Neighborhood Housing Service Partnership

The Caucus also anticipated future projects.

However, projects such as the Block Beautification Program and the Food Co-Op never got off the ground. The Neighborhood Beautification Program was designed to organize neighborhood residents to improve the physical quality of their neighborhood by building community gardens, painting and cleaning. The program also included seasonal block parties and a well developed block captain system. By not developing projects like the Neighborhood Beautification Program, the ESC lost an opportunity to get people out into the streets and mobilize concern about their community.

What exists today of the Revitalization Plan were those pieces that were initiated by established organizations who were originally members of ESC.

New Businesses for Chester, an entrepreneurial training program was continued under the auspices of RDC, Inc. The housing cooperative piece of the Cooperative and Homeownership Opportunity Program is now run under Better Housing for Chester.

The ESC project left concerned Chester citizens and activists in worse shape than it found them. No new skills were developed and the visible failure left many disheartened.

Chester Regeneration Project

The Chester Regeneration Project (CRP), also initiated in 1985, took a direction that was somewhat more technical from its inception. Like ESC, the CRP came on the heels of development projects imposed on the community from outside. Led by community activist Rev. Johnnie Monroe, the project was focused on a vision of self-reliance. The intent of CRP was to promote "a process of economic development that seeks to decrease vulnerability of Chester to outside forces while increasing the local community's power over its own economic destiny."²⁵

Somewhere along the way, the Regeneration Group never developed the connection between self-reliance and the movement to increase the community's power. In fact, both aspects of the mission were overshadowed by technical aspects of data collection and analysis for a research report. A consulting firm, Resource Planning and Management Systems, produced a technical report (completed in 1987) that inventoried business needs and community expenditures. The participants in the project were very proud of the report. However, no organization took responsibility for continuing research and implementation. The Human Services Inventory, which was to complement to the Local Economy Inventory, was never done. By not doing the Human Services Inventory, local groups missed an opportunity to get out into the community and generate grassroots support for a community project.

The Regeneration Group started with 37 representatives from various community-based organizations and churches but dwindled down to 4 before the report was completed. Currently, the Regeneration Group lies dormant. With the transfer of Rev. Monroe to another church, the movement lost

²⁵ Resource Planning and Management Systems, Local Economy Inventory, 1984

momentum.²⁶ Again no attempt was made by Monroe or other participants in the project to increase local capacity.

Thus both of these early development projects missed an opportunity to develop leadership and organization skills which could later be built upon. These skills would have been transferable to real estate or other kinds of development. The stage theory of community development points to the need for such skill building, concurrently with the organizing of residents. Grandeson also failed to transfer skills to other board and staff members. In fact, one interviewee mentioned that Grandeson ostracized Bernice Burton.

Common Ground and the Chester Organizing Project

Although the East Side Caucus and the Chester Regeneration Group failed to integrate community organizing in their projects, more recently community activists and ministers have begun an attempt to organize Chester. In December of 1988, a coalition of prominent Chester churches and community-based organizations called Common Ground formed to "give Chester's disempowered residents a voice in the planning and decision-making regarding the use of CDBG funds."²⁷

The story of Common Ground is Chester's most dramatic example of the conflict between the Chester community -- consisting of community-based organizations, churches, concerned citizens and other activists -- versus city government. In 1989, Mayor Leake made an agreement, at least in principle, with the coalition that a citizen participation board should be formed to influence the spending of CDBG funds. Common Ground believed that by presenting proposals for CDBG spending would effectively amount to citizen participation and bring them one step closer to their goal of institutionalizing a participation board. But later that year, the Mayor and council refused to include proposals from members of Common Ground in the CDBG budget which lead to a confrontational hearing. Mayor Leake's rejection letter, according to the written history of Common Ground²⁸, made a point of driving a wedge between the clergy and community

²⁶ Bednar, Ronald; "A Critical Assessment of Regeneration Planning in Community Economic Development"; unpublished student paper; University of Pennsylvania; Fall 1988

²⁷ Excerpt from Chester Organizing Project's grant application to the Campaign for Human Development (CHD), 1990

²⁸ *ibid*

organizations. By subsequently meeting with church leaders that had provided her with political support in the past, Leake was able to weaken and eventually break up the coalition.

Upon reflection, Chester community organizer James Brunswick ²⁹ realized that it was probably a tactical mistake to have groups present individual proposals. Common Ground made the mistake of letting individual groups and churches pursue their own self interests instead of working together and sticking to their plan to create a viable citizen participation board. Also, Brunswick believes Common Ground was weakened because church leadership did not have an organized power-base to back up their efforts.

If we were to place the experience of Chester within King's stage theory of community development, one could conclude that these organizations that could have been the beginnings of Chester's grassroots contingent, had virtually skipped the organizing stage.

The Chester Organizing Project (COP) was founded by members of Common Ground with the assistance of the Regional Council of Neighborhood Organizations. COP is trying to rebuild a bridge between church leaders and community groups. The organization also seeks to build a large grassroots constituency with the churches as its power base. COP is currently in the process of extending and strengthening its membership base. COP plans to carefully structure a power base within the congregations and their parish communities, as well as provide leadership training for ministerial and lay leaders. The efforts of COP over an 18 month period will culminate in a city-wide conference which will focus on developing and documenting a community-based vision for the city.

Strategic goals of COP include building collective leadership through a sponsoring committee that is broadly representative of local churches, doing a power analysis of Chester City and the surrounding county, and fundraising.³⁰

²⁹ Brunswick is an employee of the Regional Council of Neighborhood Organizations (RCNO) as well as the lead organizer of the Chester Organizing Project. RCNO promotes community organizing and trains organizers throughout the Delaware Valley.

³⁰ A more detailed discussion of COP's goals and objectives, an 18 month timeline, and results from its survey of pastoral leadership can be found in the CHD application.

The long term objective of the Chester Organizing Project is stated at building a "broad-based organization powerful enough to challenge the corruption, and organized crime which have set the city's agenda for so long."³¹

The challenges faced by the Organizing Project include dealing with the changing nature of church membership from neighborhood or parish-based to commuter-based, and the increasing demand for social services which drains much of the churches' resources, as well as the limited energy and time of church pastors.

Given that COP has a strategy to address the issues of power, leadership training and a inclusive process for developing a community-based vision of development, two questions arise: 1) How well can COP connect the various parts of this strategy (i.e. building a power base, leadership development, training, community vision) to actual development projects? and 2) How clearly do COP leaders understand the relationship between each piece of the strategy and the broader context of exogenously determined economics and politics. It is in the process of actual development that the community learns its limitations given economic reality. By understanding economic development the community gains power necessary to confront the vested interests of the county.

Chester activists, through reevaluating their experiences in Common Ground and creating the Chester Organizing Project, realized that they missed a crucial component in their strategy --- grassroots organizing. These activists have come back to what King calls the organizing stage. This doubling back between stages in community development is a common occurrence according to King. If an organized grassroots coalition can frame issues within the context of a broad vision after generating enough interest among the populace to bring the coalition the strength of a social movement, it can address what many perceive as fragmentation and may give Chester development efforts increased chances for success. Because the COP seeks to redress issues of accountability and leadership through grassroots organizing (as well as establishing a well structured system of accountability) it has the potential to be the focal point of a social movement.

³¹ excerpt from Common Ground's CHD grant application, prepared by James Brunswick, 1990

UNDERSTANDING LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT IN CHESTER'S BLACK COMMUNITY; A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

The conflicts between community and city, city and county and the fragmentation of community based efforts all have their roots in the leadership vacuum of Chester's black community. To understand the local leadership vacuum in Chester, a historical perspective is needed. Chester's black community makes up the majority of the population and currently comprises the community's most powerful public officials. One would therefore expect a significant amount of Chester's leadership to emanate from the black community. This chapter draws heavily on the dissertation of Anna Squarrel-Jenkins, Leadership in a Black Community: A Model for the Study of Urban Communities to show that the dearth of leadership in the black community is caused by: limited roles for blacks within the economic sphere, decline of influence of the traditional community-based leaders during the sixties, lack of accountability among public officials, and the lack of a tradition of community activism.

According to Squarrel-Jenkins, there were very few opportunities for blacks to take on leadership roles in the economic sphere because of racism. As early as the 1940's, black and white Chesterites were competing for menial jobs as Chester's industrial base eroded. The few proprietorships that existed and continue to exist in Chester's black community are concentrated in personal services such as undertaking or barbering. Because these services are based in a localized market and, in the case of barbering, depend on disposable income, they are very limited in their economic impact.

Blacks were limited to leadership roles that were internal to the community until the Civil Rights era. Leadership was legitimized through community service, leadership in the neighborhood church, and adherence to certain social norms and moral behavior. This formed the traditional leadership structure in Black Chester.

With the decline of economic resources available to the black community and the community's increasing dependence on the welfare system, the white community's influence in establishing social norms and models of propriety increased substantially through the introduction of social workers in the black community. (pgg 173 -178) Because they were no longer establishing the primary models of status and achievement, the traditional leaders' power began to wane.

The power of traditional leaders further deteriorated as the civil rights movement opened up many opportunities for blacks within the larger society. In Chester, this meant that many of the city's most capable youth sought avenues outside the traditional leadership structure (and outside of Chester as well) for status and recognition. (pg 210) With new opportunities for education and job advancement, the status (of being well educated or having a professional title for example) provided by these opportunities became a new criteria for selecting leaders.

"[The emergence of these new criteria] introduced an incongruence for the existing leadership [i.e. traditional] ranks. These new people possessed knowledge, skills, and experiences which existing organization leaders saw as beneficial. Therefore, they were encouraged to join the various community-based organizations, but generally, they expected to move into leading positions in these organizations not by virtue of their service and proven commitment but by virtue of their objective potential to make specific kinds of contributions. They were incongruent, therefore, in that their incomes or social class levels were similar to those of existing leaders, but they had often not won high status recognition in the community. They had skipped the socialization process of moving up through the ranks." (pg 281)

"These new people" that Squarrel-Jenkins refers to took on leadership roles in the public sphere and make up a large majority of Chester's black public officials. Public officials or external gatekeepers are:

"Black people who hold positions of power which, ostensibly, make them representatives of the black community. The roles which they hold are not part of the institutional structures to be found within the black community. Instead, their roles most often reflect the ability of the power structure of the established white community to penetrate the boundaries of the black community." (pg 281)

Because the leadership roles of public officials are not part of any institutional structures to be found within the black community, these officials have little or no accountability to the black community which they supposedly represent. Interviews with the late Arthur Early, a black state representative, and another elected official revealed "incidents from their own pasts which, in other places might well have compromised their abilities to gain political offices." (pg 242) Below, in his own words, Representative Early reveals how little accountability black elected officials have to the black community.

"Individuals who maintain party support [sic] are safe. Even personal scandal such as moral or criminal infringements cannot hurt an individuals chances as long as they have the support of the [Republican party] organization." (pg 242)

Squarrels-Jenkin's survey of Chester residents revealed that an overwhelming majority of elected officials were identified as well known

but not well respected.³²

Community activists came on the Chester scene in the early 1960's. Squarrel-Jenkins notes that the activists' standing in the community was not legitimized through the traditional leadership structure. Because their style is relatively more confrontational than the traditional leaders and they are in constant conflict with public officials they are, to a certain extent, outsiders. Activists are held up to intense public scrutiny within the community. Because they were not based within the traditional leadership structure, they sometimes have difficulties in aligning themselves with it. From the view of both the traditional leaders and the public officials, activists are generally associated with stirring up a fuss, rather than with solving problems.

The power of the activist is ephemeral. The activist does not have to be associated with various traditional community institutions such as the church or the local NAACP, nor is their role legitimized by a distinguished record of community service or behavioral norms. The activist simply recognizes the popular sentiments within the community, possesses or successfully claims the legitimacy to articulate these sentiments, and has the ability to mobilize the citizenry.

It is little wonder then, that activists did not succeed in institutionalizing a power base or within the community, nor did they succeed in leaving a legacy of a well developed philosophy of community struggle during the 1960's. (pg 236)

Within Chester's black community, we find the source of many of the conflicts between county and the city (and indirectly with the community), conflicts between city officials and the community, as well as the source of fragmentation of community based efforts. These conflicts arise because many of the dynamics that Squarrel-Jenkins identifies in the 1950s and 1960s still manifest themselves within Chester today.

There are few blacks who can take on leadership roles within the economic sphere. Arthur Bean -- a local businessman, president of the Chester Businessmen's Association, and board member of the County Chamber of Commerce -- is one of a small number of exceptions. Chester's political officials are isolated between a manipulative county machine and a

³² Squarrel-Jenkins' sample was composed of 50 black Chester residents. The sample reflected a range of demographics and social statuses

populace that holds them in disdain. As we have seen, the activists, now leaders of Chester's community-based organizations continue to have a tenuous relationship with the traditional leadership of Chester's churches. Because activists and traditional leaders have always lacked complete solidarity, this affected their confrontation with Mayor Leake.

Furthermore, activists did not establish a tradition of community activism and struggle. Therefore Chester was not able to progress from a dependency stage to an organizing stage to an institution-building stage. Without a tradition of struggle, Chesterites were never able to develop a social movement from their acts of protest and attempts to establish organizations. This results in the fragmentation of community-based efforts that is still evident today.

CHAPTER THREE

KEY PLAYERS

As we have seen in Chapter Two, the apparent impasse in economic development over the last ten years can be best understood by studying the interactions between institutions and individuals. In order to better understand the conflicts between community/city and county, community and city, and the fragmentation of community-based efforts which contribute to the current state of impasse, it is important to know exactly what people think about the current state of economic development in Chester.

Chapter 3 focuses on the responses from approximately 20 interviews with representatives of community-based organizations, the city's development agency, the county's development agencies, banks, foundations, and the State Department of Community Affairs. All interviewees have experience with economic development projects in the city of Chester.

Interviewees were asked what were the problems, what were the sources of these problems, what could be done to improve the state of impasse in economic development, and what was their vision of a revitalized Chester.

Through the interview process I learned that many of the Gittell factors are indeed important to the revitalization of Chester in the minds of key players, giving support to Gittell's theory. Interviewees cited leadership, community participation, and the need for some center of gravity for community based efforts. Guided by Gittell's factors I also asked the interviewees about community vision.

While the interviewees agree on what some of the problems are, that there is a lot of work that must be done and there is a lot that must change in Chester; they generally do not agree on the content of that work, nor the character of the changes. In many cases, the disparity in views stems from where the interviewees stand at different points in the county/city/community conflicts. To make clear the lines of disagreement and conflict, interviewees are identified by their institutions and its geographic sphere of influence. Though the number of representatives from each group may not be statistically representative, they reflect substantive divergences in opinions by people with decision making authority or influence in agencies that are important to Chester's revitalization. Table Three is a chart that lists the respondents, their institutional affiliation, and the geographic focus of their current work or experience.

INTERVIEWEES

Table 1

name	organizational affiliation		geographic sphere of influence	other affiliations
Arthur Bean	President	Chester Businessmens' Association	city of Chester	board member: County Chamber of Commerce Chester Regeneration Project
Ronald Bednar	Regional Planner	Pennsylvania State Dept. of Community Affairs	state of PA	
James Brunswick	Lead Organizer	Chester Organizing Project	city of Chester	Regional Council of Neighborhood Organizations
John Carbone	Enterprise Zone Coord.	Chester Redevelopment Authority	city of Chester	
Beth Denitz	Program Officer	Pew Charitable Trusts	regional	
Sr. Marion Fields	Executive Director	Better Housing for Chester	city of Chester	board member: Chester Regeneration Project
Chris Franklin	Government Relations	County Chamber of Commerce	Delaware County	
Andi Getek	Government Reporter	Delaware County Daily Times	Delaware County	
Theresa Heintz	Chairperson	City Planning Commission	city of Chester	former board member: County Chamber of Commerce
Steve Henderson	Vice President, Lending	First Keystone Federal Bank	Delaware County	
Al Hilbert	Manager	Riverbridge Development Corp.	Riverbridge Site	
Bernadette Hilton	Member	East Side Caucus	Chester's East Side	Chester Community Improvement Project
Kent Jones	Executive Director	Chester Community Improvement Project	city of Chester	
Christina Klugar	Former Program Officer	Pew Charitable Trusts	regional	
Steve Merriken	Director of Planning	Chester Redevelopment Authority	city of Chester	
Ann Miskowski	Education Specialist	County Chamber of Commerce		
Luis Mora	Lender	Dept of Community Development & Public Responsibility CoreStates Bank	regional	former State Planner, Louisiana
Nick Nagurny	Director	Scott Paper Foundation	city of Chester	Public Relations: Scott Paper Company
William Payne	Director of Planning	RDC, Inc.	Delaware County	Chester's housing task force
John Pickett	Executive Director	Delaware County Planning Commission	Delaware County	
Tom Rapone	Former Director	County Industrial Development Corp.	Delaware County	
Willie Mae Wells	Executive Director	Chester Redevelopment Authority	city of Chester	

The chapter is divided into five sections. The sections reflect those subjects that came up most often in interviewee responses. The first section, Perceptions reveals what respondents thought were the major problems in Chester that prohibited the implementation of an economic development strategy. Visions, reveals what interviewees thought a revitalized Chester should look like and discusses the conflict among those visions. Local Leadership explores who might implement those visions. Community Participation discusses what many respondents believed to be one of the most vital ingredients in an improved revitalization strategy. A final section, What is Really Going On Here? draws on the differing responses of interviewees to flesh out the underlying conflicts among county, city, and community.

PERCEPTIONS

Many interviewees were concerned with the way Chester is perceived, both by the community itself and by those outside the community. Corruption, disorganization of local government, fragmentation of community-based initiatives, lack of community spirit, and a milieu of social problems --- these are all words used by interviewees in describing the city of Chester. The negative image of Chester is pervasive. It is shared by Chesterites as well as those institutions outside of Chester that are important to the city's economic future.

Gittell suggests that a community's positive self-perceptions are important to the implementation of a community development strategy. Positive perceptions are critical in getting a broad-based constituency to support and actively participate in the community's revitalization. According to Gittell, community perceptions are positive if citizens believe the benefits of economic development will accrue to them and when they believe that there is a strong likelihood of the success development efforts. Such beliefs imply a certain level of trust in local officials.

It is equally important to consider what outside institutions think of Chester. These institutions provide monetary, technical and political support. Outsider perceptions influence the prescriptive solutions that define the programs or policies these institutions use when working in Chester. When these prescriptions work at cross purposes, they contribute to the impasse in Chester's economic development.

The following section will briefly describe residents' perception of corruption in Chester's city government and will discuss the perception of government corruption by those outside of Chester. Other views of

"outsiders" discussed in this section include regional funders' perception that community-based efforts are disorganized and fragmented.

Corruption

Recently, the corruption of Chester's city government has been a hot topic of area newspapers. The Delaware County Daily Times runs articles almost daily on HUD investigations, conflicts of interest, grand jury testimonies, and indictments of local officials.

As Chapter Two revealed, Chester's reputation for corruption is rooted in fact. Corruption is a legacy left by the Republican party and almost 100 years of patronage. It is maintained by an at-large voting structure with Republican party bosses pulling strings behind the scenes. County officials contribute to Chester's negative image by denouncing Chester politics in the county paper as they did with regard to the trash to steam plant.

Chester's political corruption affects its citizenry. In Chester's last election, voter participation was less than 25%. Community needs assessments sponsored by the Scott Foundation between 1984 and 1989 revealed that corruption and apathy appeared among the top five problems in Chester. A 1989 Pennsylvania Crime Commission Report states that because of political officials connections to organized crime, "the faith that the electorate feels in its legitimate government officials surely suffers".

According to Gittell, community psychology is an important factor in getting past the inertia in economic development. In Chester, the negative community psychology is determined, in part, by the lack of faith in local politicians. Given the evidence above, it is clear that local politicians would have the trust, nor the ability, to motivate the community under these conditions.

While local leadership is important, as a practical matter it is necessary to get monetary, technical and political support from outside the city. Therefore, it is important to consider what outside institutions think of Chester. Bill Payne, of RDC Inc., believes that Chester's redevelopment will only happen if there is a change in the perceptions and preconceptions by outsiders. Luis Mora believes that in order to attract investment, Chester must create an "image that convinces people that it is a desirable place to work and do business".

Almost everyone (with the exception of city employees) agreed that it was necessary for Chester's local government to change in the long run. Kent James of the Chester Community Improvement Project, a local nonprofit housing corporation and Bill Payne of RDC, Inc noted that changes in the city's organization were even more important than changes in personnel. Others merely cited the need for general political reform in order for complete revitalization to occur. However, representatives from area organizations explained that local government's reputation would not prohibit them from continuing or expanding their commitment to Chester's economic development.

Although Chester's corruption was at the tip of interviewees' tongues, when asked about Chester's corruption, few knew specific details. In fact, most respondents were quite cautious about revealing their suspicions about Chester's "indiscretions." Interviewee perceptions of corruption often appear incomplete or contradictory. One knowledgeable interviewee believes that much of the controversy surrounding the use of CDBG dollars can be attributed to the inflexibility of HUD guidelines as to how CDBG dollars should be used for economic development. Theresa Heintz, remarked how some of the negative images have been exaggerated. More revealing are the comments by Arthur Bean, a local Chester businessman, board member of the county Chamber of Commerce, and former board member of the Chester Regeneration Project:

"What we don't need is any more negative publicity about this city. The county paper does not give a balanced view of what goes on in Chester. I have tried to get stories printed on organizations like Churches Against Drugs or the positive accomplishments of our city's youth. And do you know what they tell me? Mr. Bean, stories like that don't sell newspapers."

It seems that those who have experience working with the county and more intimate knowledge of the city, but also a commitment to seeing it change for the benefit of Chester residents, believe that the sources of Chester's negative image extend beyond criminals and beyond the actions of the local government.

As Bean points out, the perception of investors, funders, and politicians is influenced by the local media. In addition to the Daily Times, several town papers, as well as the Philadelphia Inquirer, carry frequent articles about Chester politics. Consequently, Chester's notoriety within the Philadelphia metropolitan area is inescapable. Given the county's behind-the-scenes involvement in Chester's economy and the history of the county's non-reciprocal relationship with the city (in which the county

views Chester as an economic resource without feeling a responsibility for the economic welfare of Chester residents and businesses), the county is able to isolate Chester politically and influence perceptions of the city to outside investors and funders with the aid of the county media. Although Chester's image of corruption is based on fact, it also has become a weapon for the county in its struggle to continue dominating Chester.

Fragmentation

King (1981) believes that without a community vision, activists and planners cannot clearly see how their work fits into a whole and contributes to the resolution of the community's struggles. A fragmented community is not able progress between King's stages of development.

Regional funders expressed concern over the fragmentation and duplication of efforts among community-based organizations. In addition to the fragmentation at the community level that King talks about, regional funders also talked about the need for more cooperation among key players at different levels of government, as well as between local government and community-based organizations. Representatives from the State Department of Community Affairs (DCA) and others said that they would like to see more cooperation among Chester's key players. Many of DCA's current efforts were designed to address the issue of fragmentation. For example, DCA used the influence of funding to get community-based housing developers and the CRA to work together. Similarly, RDC Inc, a countywide nonprofit organization dedicated to the advancement of economic development, has been working with banks and local housing developers to organize a housing caucus in order to bring in more private resources and better coordinate housing development.

Other respondents argued that cooperation between the private sector, city and county government has been minimal. Luis Mora from the Department of Community Development and Public Responsibility of CoreStates Bank, felt that in order for his department to stand behind a comprehensive revitalization effort, more vested stakeholders with resources and influence must make a commitment to Chester's revitalization.

Beth Denitz of the Pew Charitable Trusts expressed concern over the fragmentation and duplication of efforts among community-based organizations. Although several community-based organizations currently have been forming various coalitions and formalizing networks amongst themselves, Denitz attitude towards further efforts in Chester seems

cautious. This is understandable given their grand failure with the East Side Caucus in 1984.

Fragmentation between community-based groups has three origins. It is partly a result of the lack of leadership among community based organizations. It is also symptomatic of the pattern among community-based efforts to react against outside forces but not move beyond the initial stages of projects. Fragmentation at the community level also results from a history of conflict between Chester's traditional leadership and activists in the black community. The fragmentation between the community and the city results from a history of conflicts which can be traced back to activist agitation in the sixties.

VISIONS

The importance of a common vision is expressed in the work of Gittell as well as that of King. Gittell stresses that an inclusive approach which is important both in the initial process of developing that vision as well in developing programmatic outcomes that are defined by that vision. By soliciting maximum participation by all community stakeholders throughout the process, opposition is minimized. Gittell's cooperative model is in contrast to the assumptions underlying King's stage theory. King's model of community development anticipates conflict among stakeholders. King stresses the importance of a vision as a way of uniting the local community in order to confront and eventually to wrestle control from others outside the community. In King's model a community vision is needed so that activists and planners understand how their work fits into the whole picture. Also, to the extent that a community vision exists, development efforts can be conceptualized as part of a holistic effort --- not merely a loosely related set of programs.

The degree to which there is some overlap in vision, there is a beginning point for disparate groups to work together or in a complementary way toward community goals. However, what we find in Chester is a multiplicity of visions. Furthermore visions from representatives of community-based versus city versus county planners betray underlying conflicts.

Respondents' visions of a healthy Chester were influenced by the scope of their current work or their civic interests. This resulted in a range of responses covering subjects from social services to economic development. Among the elements of a healthy Chester, the one most often mentioned was related to using industrial development as an economic development

strategy. We will also look at the tendency of Chester planners to look exclusively inward for solutions to the problems of revitalization or what the former director of the county Industrial Development Corporation called "not thinking outside the box".

Industrial Development

Understanding interviewees' views on industrial development is important because heavy industry has been at the center of Chester's economy for more than 70 years and many believe that it should continue to play a large role in the city's revitalization. All of Chester's waterfront land, which is about one-fifth of the total land in the city, is zoned for industrial use. The redevelopment of Chester's waterfront property for industrial use has been the subject of controversy over the last decade. For many years the city was lax about enforcing zoning codes along the waterfront. Today many small businesses and homes are interspersed with industrial uses. Though the majority of the non-industrial buildings are in dilapidated condition and are slowly being vacated, they still house several poor families and small proprietorships.

Interviewees agreed that industrial development should play some part in the city's revitalization. City planners, county representatives, and some regional funders agreed that industrial development was important to the economic future of Chester. On the other hand, community activists either did not mention industrial development or down-played its importance to the city's revitalization. Even among those that agreed on the importance of industrial development, there was not unanimous agreement on the intensity (heavy or light industrial) or the scale (number of factories). Regional funders and planners, county representatives, and the CRA were more likely to support large scale or heavy industrial development.

Regional funders and planners are committed to an industrial strategy. They offer justifications including the availability of recyclable industrial buildings to its impact on other aspects of community revitalization (such as housing). Luis Mora has worked for a number of years with nonprofit housing groups in Chester and has had experience with economic development at the state level in Louisiana. He felt that attracting large industry is necessary for Chester's revitalization because it was the only way to provide a secure employment base and furthermore "any housing strategy cannot survive in the long run without an employment base."

The Department of Community Affairs felt that the availability of recyclable industrial buildings along Chester's waterfront provided an excellent opportunity to provide employment. In the early 1980's, DCA ran a program in which they supported two industrial park sites dedicated to attracting small manufacturers. One of those sites has been abandoned as a project. The other is the Riverbridge site currently owned by Delaware County.

In the eyes of county officials, industrial development in Chester is essential because of its importance to the regional and the county's economy. The county is currently recruiting small businesses for sites along Route 291. Given past conflicts over economic development between the city and the county, as well as the controversy involved with displacing residents and businesses in the area of the new route, it is quite likely that conflict may resurface over the project at some point in the future.

The plan to expand Route 291, often referred to as the industrial highway, supports the county and the city's vision of a reindustrialized Chester. The county has aggressively expended a lot of resources and energy towards pushing the expansion of the highway forward.³³ (See Figure 1) The city, usually following the county leadership, has supported industrial development as part of its larger strategy to attract all kinds of businesses to the area in the hope that these businesses will bring employment.³⁴

A large part of the vision of the Chester Redevelopment Authority carries remnants of past controversy. The expansion of Route 291 and the accompanying industrial development was protested and blocked by citizens who would have been displaced by the expansion of the highway. CRA's vision, as expressed by CRA's director of planning, Steve Merriken, is focused on a strategy of resolving conflicting land uses near the waterfront and Route 291. Merriken would like to see the waterfront areas completely rezoned to heavy and light industrial. His viewpoint of the fate of families currently living in those areas (see Figure 2) seems clinical. He believes, "It will be much less costly now to relocate

³³ interview with Chris Franklin, Government Relations Representative, County Chamber of Commerce also testimonials of Delaware County Council to Pennsylvania Dept. of Transportation

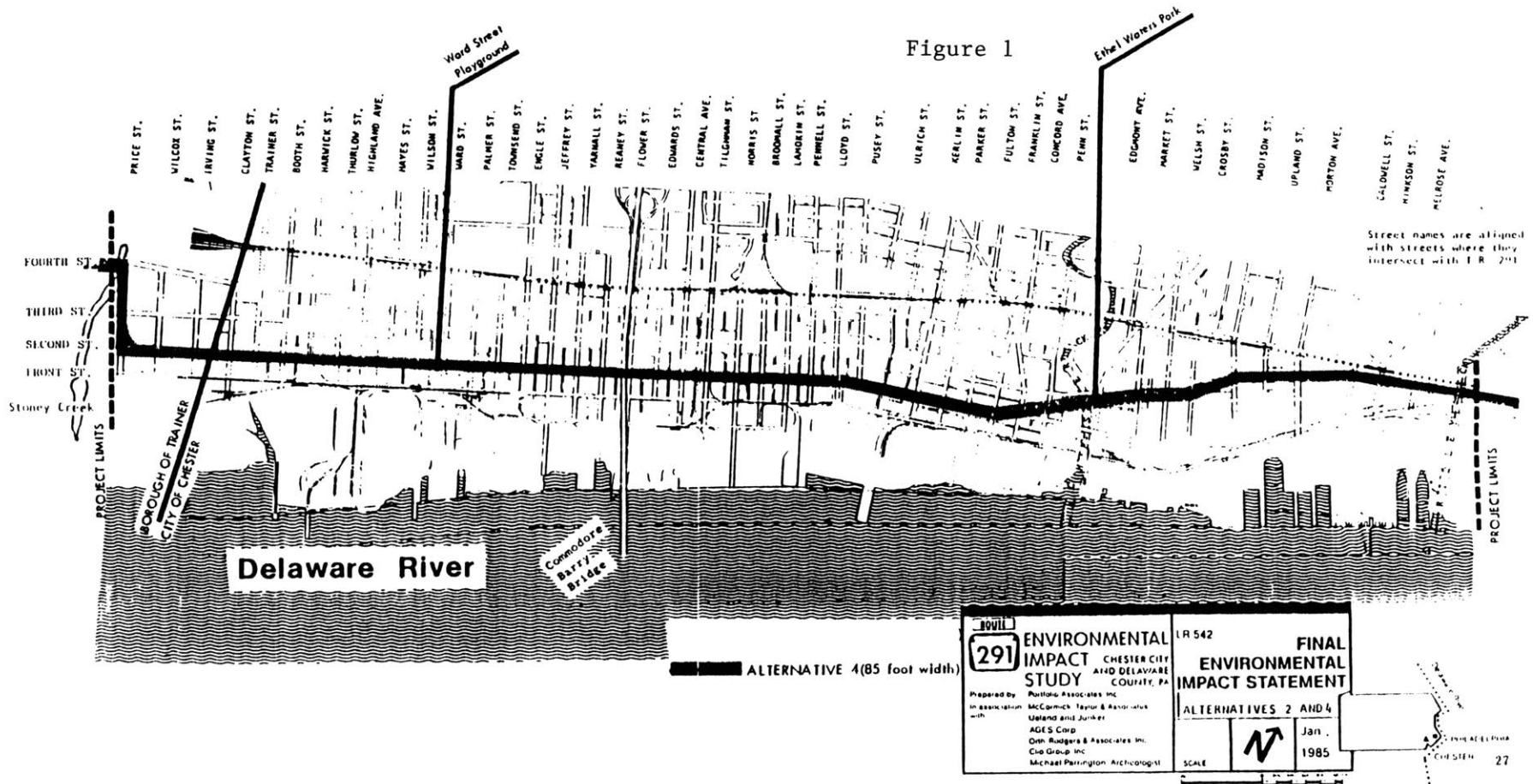
³⁴ Interview with Willie Mae Wells, Executive Director of the Chester Redevelopment Authority.

Alternative 4(85 foot width)

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PROPOSED EXPANSION - ROUTE 291

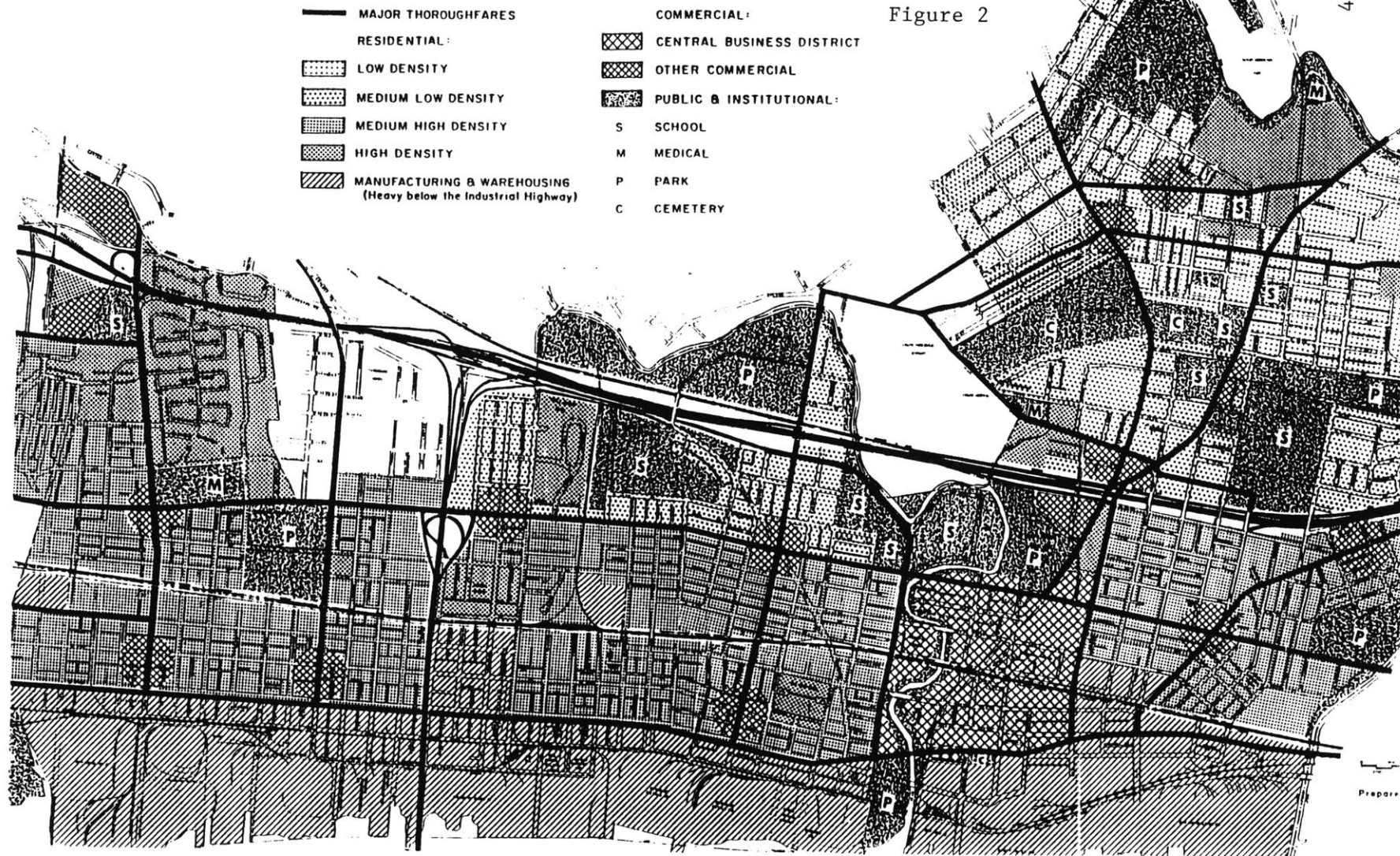
Figure 1



PROPOSED ZONING PLAN - CITY OF CHESTER

Figure 2

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families [impacted by the expansion of Route 291] because of the level of abandonment, since the highway plans were first proposed".

Thus, CRA's vision of Chester is a narrow one. It is heavily focused on physical planning and bringing in industry. Community residents opposed the expansion of the industrial highway in the past because it would displace families and small businesses located in the area and because the decision making process lacked community involvement. Although the CRA realizes that they must at least make some gesture towards community participation, the substance of city planners' comments reveal that they are motivated by the desire to see that the plans get implemented without disruption from the community. "If we don't get community participation from the beginning someone will be complaining that we didn't include them." ³⁵ Given the way economic development programs have been run in the past, it appears that CRA's viewpoint is that, effectively, only potential employers and the city need be included in this (or any future) strategy.

The responses from Chester residents like Kent James and Theresa Heintz reflect a desire for a more toned down focus on industrial development than that envisioned by the county or Merriken. Theresa Heintz, chair of the City Planning Commission and a small business owner, felt that industrial development should be of a moderate scale. Kent James, director of CCIP a local nonprofit housing organization, thought that small business rather than industrial development should be the focus of economic development. These residents' responses reflect concerns brought out in past community-based economic development initiatives. As mentioned in Chapter Two, the reaction against the high-tech development plans proposed by RDC and others in the early 1980's was because the plan did not consider the fate of poorer citizens that lived near these industrial areas. Furthermore, citizens were not consulted regarding the content of any of these plans.

The success of a community vision is dependent upon the degree to which it incorporates the concerns of the broadest spectrum of the community according to Gittell. In Gittell's estimation, the success of an industrial development strategy -- if it is considered as one part of the community vision -- will depend upon its ability to incorporate the concerns of a wide range of constituents. However, in King's view, the

³⁵ Interview with a city planner

vision must be used as a unifying force so that through their collective power, the community can effectively negotiate with more powerful vested interests from outside the community.

When visions reflect conflicting interests, it sets the stage for conflict. Visions surrounding the idea of industrial development reflect such conflicts. Most agree that industrial development is a good way to create jobs for the people of Chester. However there is little agreement among anyone about what the scale or intensity of industrial development should be. Furthermore industrial development along the waterfront is the source of controversy between advocates of Chester residents who live near the waterfront and those -- especially county and city officials -- who support industrial development on those properties. Given the ability of activists to block development plans in the past, industrial development may continue to be at an impasse until the conflicts can be resolved.

Inward Looking Vision or "Not Thinking Outside the Box"

Tom Rapone of the Delaware County Industrial Development Corporation (Delco IDC) coined the phrase "thinking outside the box" during my interview with him. He said that Chester planners must begin "thinking outside the box" --- that is, understanding their economic situation in the context of county and regional trends in order to begin a substantial revitalization process.

Although Rapone's observation of being able to understand the community's economic situation in the context of larger economic trends is a valid one, we should not confuse Tom Rapone's idea of thinking outside the box with Gittell's inclusive vision of community development. If we look at Rapone's comment in the context of county development initiatives, especially in facilitating the development of Route 291 as discussed in Chapter Two, we can interpret his observation as reflective of the county's position that Chester should subordinate its own objectives to regional and county objectives.

Even though I question Tom Rapone's underlying motivation expressed in his observation that planners in the city of Chester need to think outside the box, this description of the tendency towards an inward looking vision is accurate when applied to community-based planners.

There is a long history of inward-looking visions which began in the early 1980s. As a response to plans that did not take into account community

needs or community viewpoint, activists responded by creating plans of their own which were focused on promoting self-sufficiency. The concept of self-sufficiency manifested itself in plans like the East Side Caucus which were focused mostly on narrowly defined needs and community resources. The idea of self-sufficiency was further developed as the ideology behind the Chester Regeneration Project. This kind of ideological thinking can severely limit the impact of community-based projects if strategies are not developed in the context of the larger political, economic and social development picture.

Locally-based planners still don't seem to be thinking outside the box. The economic development strategies they described focus on the best use of specifically local resources. "We should make the best of the resources that we have available...", said Bill Payne. "What Chester does not need is some new institution. We should concentrate on using those [local] institutions that have proven themselves technically capable", remarked Nick Nagurny.

While the above comments may not, in themselves, be a source of contention, what was noticeably absent from the comments of people like Nagurny and Payne was the role that the county or regional sources play in Chester's problems, its economy, or in the future of its revitalization.

Visions of a revitalized Chester are as varied as the number of key players. Local Chesterites tend to focus exclusively inward for solving Chester's problems, while county representatives believe Chester should think of itself as part of the larger county and regional economy. The city is sandwiched between these views. It believes that Chester should be thought of as part of the county, but not only as an economic resource. City representatives think the county should share in the responsibility of Chester's recovery. What these disparate visions add up to is several levels of conflict. The conflict in visions contributes to the impasse in economic development.

LOCAL LEADERSHIP

Gittell defines leadership as the ability to engage the citizenry as well as higher levels of government for the purpose of promoting economic development. (Gittell 1988) Thus, a leader has stature among his/her constituents as well as among powerful politicians and agency people at higher levels of government. He/she also has the ability to manipulate the right people to get money, permits, or political support. In short, the leader can get things done.

However, responses from interviewees indicate that a leadership vacuum exists in the city of Chester. The current vacuum of local leadership is a critical issue for Chester, especially now, given that many of the decisions that will affect Chester's economic future are being made on the state and county level. Route 291's widening will impact homes along the new route. The county is doing the most aggressive recruiting of businesses that are to be located on that highway. Unless it changes course, Chester will relinquish control of its own economic destiny to the county. In this section we will use the Gittell criteria to explore where potential leadership roles may exist.

Almost everyone interviewed expressed the need for leadership in one form or another. However, no particular individual or institution was consistently mentioned as being able to play a leadership role. In fact, when asked if they could identify specific organizations or individuals that could step into a leadership role in Chester's revitalization, many were stuck for an answer.

Of those interviewees that did mention people with leadership potential, there was no consensus on the individuals or the criteria for which people identified potential leaders. Respondents criteria for potential leaders reflected interviewees interests. State representatives and regional funders that have a commitment to locally controlled development, seek to avoid the city and the county. They identified Chester residents with proven commitment to the community. County sources, seeking to benefit economically from and possible to control Chester's development, identified Chesterites with experience in county economic development.

In order to be able to motivate people, a leader must have the trust of the citizenry according to Gittell. Community-based initiatives have produced people that are knowledgeable about the needs of their community. These community-based professionals are seen as trustworthy by the community but are limited in their potential to provide leadership on economic development initiatives. For example, interviewees from some state and regional institutions respectfully noted the work of Sr. Marion Fields and Kent James. These activists are respected locally and have the ability to garner grass roots support on a moment's notice. However, most of the experience of community leaders to date has been focused around housing issues. Also, many of the organizations are still developing their technical capacity and expertise. Because of limited funding, these organizations are already stretched to the limit in terms of staff

capacity which leaves them little time to commit to initiatives other than their own organizations.

In order to be able garner resources and have influence at different levels of government, a leader must have credibility with these institutions. Although no obvious institution or individual was consistently identified to take on a leadership role by interviewees, two other local people were mentioned by county and foundation sources because of their past experience in economic development. Both individuals have been involved with development at the county level. Bill Payne of RDC, Inc and Theresa Heintz, Chairman of the City Planning Commission are both respected by county economic development professionals and both are extensively involved with community-based efforts. Payne, through his work with RDC has worked with a number of community groups involved with the Chester Regeneration Project and the East Side Caucus. He continues to have a working relationship with many community-based professionals and is currently working on organizing housing efforts.³⁶ Heintz has experience in county economic development agencies. However, she mentioned that her primary interest is in more social service oriented activities such as health and education.

Among interviewees whose organizational affiliation requires a more regional view of the world, two interviewees mentioned the need for a state representative to get involved in reshaping the image of Chester. Tom Rapone named a particular state representative whom he thought was bright and ambitious and Rapone noted that this representative's future was tied to the future of Chester. Given the longstanding bottlenecks in the widening of Route 291, there is a need for some influence at the state level. Luis Mora, however, was uncertain if there was enough incentive for a state representative to be involved with the revitalization of Chester.

Squarrel-Jenkin's historical analysis (see Chapter Two) tells us that the lack of accountability among the city's elected officials results from the leadership structure within the black community. Therefore, in order to insure accountability, a structure of leadership must be rebuilt that connects a grassroots constituency directly to city hall. Currently

³⁶ Local housing developers, banks, Chester RDA, and the State DCA have recently put together a housing caucus in order to bring in more private resources and better coordinate housing development.

there is an organizing effort underway amongst some of the most prominent congregations in Chester to redress these issues.

This effort, called the Chester Organizing Project (COP), seeks to develop a cadre of more accountable leaders and simultaneously restructure the relationships between the community, community-based activists, churches and local government. COP emerged from the experiences of the Common Ground coalition discussed in Chapter Two. Presently, the efforts of COP are focused on expanding its membership base, developing leadership, creating a very detailed structure of accountability among church leadership and their congregations and building trust between churches and denominations. The use of churches as an organizing base is a significant one. A 1987 focus group study conducted by Villanova University revealed that churches were the only institutions in which Chester residents had any confidence.³⁷

While interviewees unanimously agree that a leadership vacuum exists in Chester, they do not agree about what institutions are the best sources for leadership. Nor do they agree about the criteria upon which to base effective leadership. Institutions with a commitment to local control look for commitment and credibility with the local constituency, others rely on technical competence and credibility with higher levels of government. Here again we find a source for potential impasse for leadership that can motivate a broad based constituency around Chester's economic development.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION & A MOVEMENT TOWARDS SOCIAL CHANGE

As we noted above, members of Common Ground and COP recognized the need for more community participation in economic development and local government, respectively. In fact, almost all regional funders and activists agreed that there was a need for more community participation amongst Chester residents. Local Chester planners have come to terms with the need for a more participatory planning process through their experience in having planning projects blocked.

This section will chronicle funders' and activists' perspectives, as well as documentation on community participation. We will then review two different approaches to community participation in the programs of COP and CRA.

³⁷ cited in COP's grant application to CHD; 1991

Regional funders and activists mentioned the need for more active community participation. There is evidence of apathy among Chester citizens in low voter participation rates as well as in a community needs assessment. The Scott Foundation contracted 4 community needs assessments between 1984 and 1989. Apathy was cited among the top five problems in Chester in the 1988 assessment. "There isn't the spirit [in Chester] like there is in Camden" said Christina Klugar, former program officer of the Pew Charitable Trust in referring to the East Side Caucus project versus Pew's Camden initiative. Klugar points out that many of the opportunities to get neighborhood people directly involved in the community's revitalization, such as the Block Beautification Program, were never pursued in the East Side Caucus project. City officials rarely emphasized the need for more community participation and county officials did not mention it at all.

Getting citizens involved in the plight of their community has been strongest when in opposition to an elitist development efforts such as the high-tech development project proposed by RDC in 1985. However, getting broad-based participation in actual development projects has been less successful. CDBG programs in the 1970's which required citizen participation were sparsely attended.³⁸ The Chester Regeneration Project started off with approximately 37 active participants but dwindled down to 4 before the consultant report was published.³⁹

Foundation representatives and activists noted that many community-based projects were too grandly conceived to be handled by groups with little development experience. Funders and activists who were involved with the projects were disappointed and frustrated with community-based efforts. Other activists believe that the lack of a stable grass roots constituency behind community-based efforts caused their success to be diminished.

Among activists and funders community participation is perceived to be a necessity for achieving development that is responsive to the needs of Chester citizens. Among city officials community participation is a necessary, and perhaps even bothersome step in the planning process. In the remainder of this section we will examine the how these perspectives

³⁸ The community Development Block Grant Program: An analyses of Its Impact in Delaware County; Health & Welfare Council, Inc., Delaware County Area Office; 1977

³⁹ Based on Interview with Sr. Marion Fields and documents from Chester Regeneration Project.

play themselves out in different approaches to community participation in the Chester Organizing Project and through the planning process of the Chester Redevelopment Authority.

The Chester Organizing Project is being staffed by James Brunswick of the Regional Council of Neighborhood Organizations. According to Brunswick, RCNO strongly believes and is trying to convince community economic development professionals in the region that "you have to have an organized power base where people have public skills and can negotiate with public officials before development can be successful and before you can have the kind of development that will benefit the lowest income folks in the community."⁴⁰

While there is a good chance that RCNO's philosophy will be integrated into the COP, this is not guaranteed. In fact, even though many of the members of Common Ground make up the core membership of COP, the long term objectives of COP have shifted from those of Common Ground. Common Ground's primary goal was "to give Chester's disempowered residents a voice in planning and decision making regarding the use of CDBG funds."⁴¹ COP's long term goals are currently centered around changing the leadership structure within the public sphere. Only time will tell whether or not the expanded membership of COP will return to addressing the issue of community participation in local economic development decisions.

CRA's approach to community participation is based on less of a conviction that community participation is necessary for development that is responsive to the community's needs, than a necessary step in order to get projects approved. The CRA is currently engaged in an 18 month process during which it will update its master plan. Despite the frustration with actual projects, city planners have learned that it is critical to make at least a good faith effort to solicit community involvement. RDC Inc, and others have had their projects halted by neglecting to solicit community opinion and participation from the very beginning. For this reason neighborhood meetings, a citizen participation committee, and committee approval will be institutionalized as part of the revision of Chester's comprehensive master plan, scheduled to be completed by June of 1992.

⁴⁰ Interview with Mickey Brunswick

⁴¹ Common Ground Application to Campaign for Human Development, prepared by Lead Organizer Brunswick, James A.; Chester, PA; 1991

With regard to the CRA's approach to citizen participation, however, one caveat should be mentioned. Because of their experience of getting plans blocked, the essential objective of community participation by Chester planners is to get the plans implemented. For this reason broad based participation will probably not be aggressively pursued. When asked how the City Planning Committee intended to insure that the maximum number of citizens were recruited for the process Theresa Heintz' response was cynical. "Those people that care will show up".

When asked if COP would play a role in the city's advisory process, Brunswick stressed that before issues are put on the table with the city, leadership skills must be developed and a system of accountability must be set up. COP's initial strategy also has an 18 month time line. During this period, congregants will be interviewed regarding what their concerns are. At the end of the 18 month period, a conference is planned. At that time representatives will discuss and document their vision for the city.

When I asked Brunswick if his coalition would protest aspects of the plans that were not in the community's best interests, he thought that unless there was some highly offensive issue, COP would be too busy setting up its own agenda for revitalization. It will be interesting to see what reactions COP will have to the city's community participation process at the end of the 18 month period.

It seems that community participation in Chester may be moving into a new age. Members of the Chester Organizing Project will not be satisfied with fancy reports and impressive community development agenda as their predecessors have been. If COP realizes its goals of developing leaders that are accountable to the community and building an extensive grass roots constituency, the coalition will have the power to affect true reform in Chester city government, getting it one step closer to breaking the impasse in economic development.

WHAT IS REALLY GOING ON HERE?

Locally based development in the city of Chester is at an impasse. We have learned in this chapter that key players disagree why this is so. Community activists blame the lack of cooperation and accountability within the city government. Regional funders cite the lack of expertise of community groups. The county believes Chester should look outside the box. The city blames the county for "treating it like a stepchild". Many blame factors that are internal to Chester.

The impasse, in fact, reflects three levels of conflict between the interests of the community, city, and county. The broadest level of conflict is that of local versus county control over development. The county believes that Chester should think of itself in the larger context of economic development in the county and in the region, whereas the city believes that the county should include it as an equal partner in economic development and not treat Chester like a stepchild. In the case of Chester, making the argument of local versus county control is complicated by the corruption emanating from the Republican party. By perpetuating Chester's negative image, the county paper aids in serving the county's interest in controlling Chester's development. By perpetuating a negative image, funders who might be potential resource for locally controlled development are cautious. This allows Chester's development to remain in a state of inertia while the county gains a greater foothold along the proposed Route and along the waterfront.

Secondly, there is the conflict between public officials and the community over the official's lack of accountability. With regards to industrial development the city has pursued a strategy of industrial development which includes the expansion of Route 291. Activists and local citizens believe an economic development strategy focused on heavy industry is not necessarily in the interests of the people and businesses currently located along the waterfront. However, in the past the city has sided with the county against the wishes of the community. Furthermore, their current efforts towards community participation are largely motivated by a desire to get plans implemented without opposition from the community. Therefore, underlying the current policy orientation toward community involvement, there is still a conflict of interests and a potential for continuing impasse.

The third source of impasse is the fragmentation of community-based efforts. Community-based groups and church leaders lack solidarity and community-based planners efforts have been isolated and in some cases community-based groups are duplicating efforts. Fragmentation has made the community vulnerable to interference from the city, as was the case in the Common Ground coalition, and fragmentation contributes to planners not thinking outside the box.

Given that there are underlying conflicts which contribute to Chester's impasse, an analysis and perscription that deals with the imbalance of power between the community and city versus the county is neccesary. This takes us beyond the consensual limits of Gittell's list of factors and

places the Chester experience closer, in spirit, to the work of King. In Chapter Four I will review my analysis in light of the Gittell and King theory. Chapter four will also draw on key player's perceptions and current projects to make suggestions on how to move Chester beyond the impasse.

CHAPTER FOUR

REVIEW, ANALYSIS, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS

Chapter Four contains a review of the findings, analysis and suggestions for future action in changing the direction of Chester's economic development. The first section, What Have We Learned? recaps the major findings in light of the theory explored in Chapter One. A State of Impasse clarifies some of the contradictions and fills out the incomplete views of interviewees in Chapter Three. Finally, Where Does Chester Go From Here? draws on the first two sections and makes broad-based recommendations for reversing decline in the city.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?

In Chapters Two and Three, we drew upon the work of Ross Gittell and Mel King as a means of understanding the apparent contradictions of people's actions and viewpoints with regard to the revitalization of Chester, Pennsylvania.

Gittell's analysis focuses on filling certain roles and functions. These roles, when filled, serve as synergistic components which reverse the state of inertia in the economic revitalization of a mid-sized city. The Gittell's factors are static and they assume a propensity for consensus among all vested interests. However, in the case of a community where vested interests from outside the community threatened to retard or inhibit the development of that community for the benefit of the people, a more confrontational and developmental model is needed. Mel King's stage development theory provides that model.

King stresses the developmental aspect of revitalization, with organizing and indigenous institution building playing a key role. Organizing not only changes the community's psychology, but it unites the community and gives it more power to confront the precarious interests of outsiders. King's developmental model requires a sense of momentum and continuity in order to see that a community progresses from one stage to the next. King's stage theory implies this sense of momentum and continuity but it is not explicit.

The social movement concept's sense of momentum and a sense of continuity place a premium on local activists and planners understanding of history and strategic planning. A knowledge of history (which is more expanded than Gittell's requirement which only cover those socio-political factors

that effect a community's economic development history and the community's receptiveness to future revitalization efforts) that includes a historical analysis of leadership structure is necessary so that actors and planners can learn from their mistakes. Strategic planning is necessary so that individual projects, protests, and plans move the community forward towards reaching its self-defined vision. I have also added to the Gittell and King literature an understanding of the conflicts between major stakeholders.

The significance of the social movement concept in the case of Chester is that it implies that a community vision must serve as more than the rallying point or consensus building mechanism that Gittell suggests. The vision is a goal or set of goals toward which the community coordinates planning, institution building, and grass-roots organizing. With a sense of continuity that a social movement provides, efforts can be evaluated, new agendas set and actions taken with the idea that all of the former are directed towards materializing the vision.

This notion of a social movement stands in contrast to the action/reaction planning that has characterized Chester's community-based efforts in the past. The initial reaction never moved beyond the initial plan or the initial project. The East Side Caucus and the Chester Regeneration Project had the seeds of a social movement in that one of their goals was to minimize their dependency on outside institutions for their survival. However, in the process of carrying out these projects, that goal was lost in all the technical complexities of research or in building an organization.

How well do my findings about Chester fit with these three theories? I organize this review of the findings within Gittell's categories since many of them are important to the revitalization of Chester in the minds of key players. However, within each category, Gittell's framework leaves much unexplained or unexamined, so I supplemented his theory with King's insights, and with my own.

History

As Gittell suggests, historical precedent plays an important role in shaping the community's psychology or perceptions. The perceptions of key players external to the city of Chester also play an important role. History shapes a community's leadership structure, in particular the leadership structure in Chester's black community. We pushed beyond the Gittell theory and looked at how white flight and political manipulation

have determined an imbalance of power between the county's Republican machine and local Chesterites. Gittell requires only that we look at the history of economic development projects to determine the communities receptivity to new development ventures.

We also compared Chester's political and community development with that of King's stage theory of community development. What we discovered is that in Chester's experiences with the East Side Caucus, the Chester Regeneration Project, and Common Ground, activists and planners had virtually skipped the organizing stage in their quest to create new institutions of economic development. It is the opinion of the author that because Chester activists lost several opportunities to develop a history of community struggle and social change, their many efforts did not constitute a social movement. Building a social movement requires planning. Strategic planning forces activists to understand the larger forces at work. In addition to the lack of strategic planning, the lack of a social movement made it difficult for activists and community-based planners to confront, reevaluate and move forward in a consorted effort to interact with those larger forces. In fact, what we witnessed in Chester was reactive planning and protest to the forces of the county and city government.

Vision

In the tradition of Gittell, we also tried to understand the role of an inclusive community vision. According to Gittell, an inclusive vision has the potential for changing community perceptions and getting people to work cooperatively towards the community's revitalization. What we learned in Chapter Three is that such a vision did not exist. Visions were heavily influenced by vested political interests. Community-based planners' visions, though fragmented, are in conflict with that of the city's vision of industrial development near the waterfront. At varying points in history, the city's vision was in conflict with the county's vision of the city as an economic resource that should contribute first and foremost to the growth of the county and the region.

Leadership

As was the case with community vision, we found that Chester lacked the kind of leadership that Gittell says is necessary to orchestrate and promote revitalization. Through understanding Chester's history -- with the help of Squarrel-Jenkins and by examining the imbalance of power between city and county, as well as the lack of an organized, grass-roots power-base -- we understand why the current vacuum exists. Economic

decline left very limited opportunities for local leadership in the economic sphere, particularly among black Chesterites.

Leadership from the local political officials is impossible under current conditions because they are not accountable to the citizenry. The party machine to which local officials belong left a legacy of corruption and is still believed to control city politics from behind the scenes. Additionally, local political leadership is not respected by the county.

The fate of the traditional leadership and activists also help to explain the lack of a social movement in Chester. Traditional leadership, which had its base in the black community, lost much of this influence during the Civil Rights Era but traditional leaders -- now represented by church leaders -- remain the most trusted leaders in the community. Activists have traditionally been viewed as trouble-makers, not as catalysts for positive change. Activists and church-based leaders have experienced difficulty in working together. However, this may change with the new strategies of the Chester Organizing Project.

Competent Local Development Agencies

The existence of at least one competent local development agency is another Gittell criteria for success in community revitalization. In Chester we found that the one active development agency, the Chester Redevelopment Authority, has been too susceptible to political influence to play the role as central development agency in Chester. Susan Clarke (1987), has suggested that although local institutions are constrained by: limited expertise, jurisdiction, the free floating nature of private capital, and fragmentation in local political structures; an agency's autonomy is directly linked to its propensity to engage in policies that are contrary to the interests of business [and possibly other strong political forces]. It follows from Clarke that the CRA is not likely to pursue policies in the best interests of the people when they are in conflict with the goals of local government and because of the city's current political orientation, it is unlikely to go against the interests of business. Furthermore, because of the fragmentation that has existed among community-based efforts, there is currently no logical center of gravity among community-based organizations from which a competent agency might be groomed.

Gittell would have us believe that a competent local development agency would go a long way towards solving the problem. However, as the Mon

Valley Case illustrates, the power imbalance between localities and the county makes what a local group is able to accomplish uncertain. In Chester, the county maintains the power imbalance by isolating the local government. It says the city should be more a part of county development, yet as was the case in the trash to steam plant, county officials use the county paper as a sounding board to perpetuate an image that undermines Chester's ability to promote itself to outside funders and investors.

A STATE OF IMPASSE

Locally based development in the city of Chester is at an impasse. We have learned from Chapter Three that key players disagree why this is so. What the impasse really reflects are three levels of conflict between the interests of the community, city, and county. The impasse has been aided by the inability of Chester planners and activists to "think outside the box".

Community/City vs. County Conflicts

In dealing with city/county conflicts there are two choices. 1) Negotiation or convening of the two interests or 2) a change in the balance of power between the two. Gittell's notion of finding some system of convening the interests of various groups seems unlikely in the short term given the imbalance of power and the past conflicts between the city and county. The county, in the more powerful position does not see the need to negotiate or accommodate the needs of Chester. Furthermore, the conflicts of interest between the city and county and the even more fundamental conflicts between the interests of the county and the interest of the people of Chester makes cooperation difficult. The vast political and socio-economic differences between Chesterites and the county machine leads me to believe that the county will never put the city's interests first. Therefore, it is necessary that there is a change in political leadership and new community-based institutions must be developed. Both will require getting past negative community perceptions. This is where grassroots organizing can play a key role.

The result of the county's actions on the local government is that the citizenry withdraws its support from local government or it is in constant battle with the city. Therefore in order for Chester to have development that is responsive to the needs of its poverty-stricken citizenry, the community must gain more power. With power, they can change the system of accountability with local government and can subsequently be a stronger voice in the county.

Activists must recognize that tangible benefits must be given up in the short run in order to organize the community. Stage community development theory tells us that there are certain tradeoffs in following this strategy. The tangible benefits of economic development must take a back seat to gaining power and changing community psychology through grass-roots organizing. Stage community development theory teaches us that physical or tangible development should come only **after** there is local control of development decisions. This requires that activists change the manner in which they respond to development pressure. COP's Lead Organizer realizes this when he says that the coalition will not be able to participate in the city's community participation committee. Instead of simply reacting to outside forces, the opposition should become the starting point for developing a social movement. A social movement that is in part a reform movement, part increasing community participation, and part local control over development decisions would enable Chester to change the current path of economic and civic decline.

Community vs. City Conflicts

Gittell (1990) and others (Felbinger 1980) allude to the need for a cooperative city government for successful community-based development. However, because local public officials are not accountable to the community, and have engaged in development projects without consulting the community, there have been several conflicts between city government and community-based planners. The confrontation between the Common Ground coalition and the mayor is the most dramatic example of this conflict.

Constant battles with local government take away time, energy and focus from the business of revitalizing the community. Here we can see the necessity for a social movement that forces activists and planners to look at the big picture, strategize and plan ---- to take a long range view of development. Taking such actions gives the community more power in dealing with the city and the county.

Fragmentation Within the Community

Community planners are often overwhelmed with Chester's expanse of social problems. Mayor Leake's actions of splitting up the community is an example of the city's ability to interfere with an unorganized, and therefore fragile coalition. The historical division between traditional leaders and activists make unity in the community difficult. These things lead to fragmentation at the community-based level. The fragmentation in community-based efforts does not allow community-based leadership to see how their efforts fit into a larger picture. They are not able to see the

larger picture chiefly because they have not developed a vision which community-based leadership can agree upon.

Creating a broader vision forces the community to look beyond their immediate goals and needs. When Chester planners realize that their goals can only be solved, in the long run, by dealing with the larger forces they will not only have to think outside the box but develop strategies for interacting with the world outside of the box.

Lack of Capacity

Local Chester planners failed to increase the technical capacity of local residents in the East Side Caucus and the Chester Regeneration Project. City agencies never had the opportunity to increase their capacity in the Riverbridge Project or the trash to steam plant. The agencies may have lost the opportunity in part by thier own incompetence -- but when the county took over, they deprived the city of the chance to build its competence.

Gittell's assertion that communities need to have a competent local development agency is nothing if not obvious. Chester planners must address this lack of local capacity by creating a local agency which is not only technically competent, but autonomous from political influence, and one that promotes the true spirit of participatory planning.

Self-Sufficiency Ideology

In chapters Two and Three we discussed the history of community-based planning in Chester. In those chapters we found that many community-based efforts began as a response to outside forces. The natural inclination, then, was to remove the influence of outside forces on the community's economy. Hence came the birth of a development ideology based on self-sufficiency.

While self-sufficiency in itself is a noble goal, it is a somewhat more naive goal than local control over the development process. Given the complexities in modern society and economies, it is unlikely that any city can be economically self-sufficient. Local control, while not an easy goal to obtain, requires control over development decisions, something that happens often in wealthy communities although seldom in poor ones. The self-sufficiency ideology in Chester allowed activists and planners to turn their back on outside forces rather than confront the realities and limitations of dealing with the imbalance of power between them, the city, and the county.

WHERE DOES CHESTER GO FROM HERE?

In order to change the current path of Chester's economy destiny , Chesterites must address the lack of civic pride and community participation, build a new structure of accountability and develop accountable leaders. It must reform city government, and develop alternative institutions that will foster these goals.

Address Apathy and Community Participation Through Grassroots Organizing

Chester activists have realized that change will only come about through grass roots organization. The ultimate success of activist efforts will depend upon the degree to which grassroots organizing is seen as part of a social movement that combines organizing with government reform, increasing sense of civic duty through participation in all aspects of revitalization, building community power, and local control over development.

Reform/Accountability

Interviewees noted that in the long run Chester's local government must change. We can learn from the experiences of other cities that political reform and community struggle can have impacts that are long lasting and far reaching. The experiences of Chicago during the Washington administration show us that reform politics can be combined with progressive economic development policy to provide an inspirational mode of governing. The Chicago experience also shows us without developing a deep cadre of leaders fragile coalitions can be lost.

In Boston's Roxbury community, successive struggles "[left behind] more developed leadership, consciousness, organizations, and institutions.". The Roxbury experience has made a permanent impact on the politics and development policy of the city of Boston.

"Boston's Black Political Task Force has become powerful enough that its endorsement is sought by white candidates as well as Black." (Kennedy, Tilly, and Gaston 1990)

This has allowed blacks to gain political offices at the local and state level.

Based on the long-term legacy of struggle, Roxbury's community control movement has made an unprecedented accomplishment. A local community group, the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative has gained control over their communities development by gaining the right of eminent domain over the Dudley Neighborhood in Roxbury. We should not mistake the Roxbury model as the panacea for community development. Roxbury has, by no means

solved all of its problems of poverty, deterioration, and its weak position in Boston politics. However, the gains made by Roxbury residents are an important step in this community's development.

The struggles in Boston and Chicago have had impact on the political and community revitalization policy on a national scale. Harold Washington's success inspired the presidential campaign of Jesse Jackson. "Other struggles [in Boston] over the years, especially around tenant, education, and welfare issues have linked Roxbury groups, not only within the city, but also with national networks." (Kennedy, Tilly, and Gaston 1990)

Develop New Institutions When the Time is Right

Given that there is currently no local institution that is currently capable of becoming the central economic development agency, the development of new institutions must come over time --- after extensive community organizing. Without a complete restructuring of CRA to make it a more autonomous organization or the creation of a new economic development agency, progress in economic development will be retarded without reform in local government.

The option of creating a new organization in the very near future is unlikely given past disappointments. Foundations and other funders, though friendly, are not likely to have a great deal of confidence in a new effort. Additionally, it will take a herculean effort to get past the inward looking psychology of local planners in the short run.

There are two strategies for creating hope and a sense of accomplishment among Chesterites. The Chester Organizing Project and RDC, Inc are both in a stage of evaluation and defining/redefining their efforts. If the COP can expand its goals to cover both political accountability and accountability over CDBG funding and play a policy setting role in economic development it could accomplish a great deal. Building a strong grass roots organization can regain the confidence of funders, spin off new organizations, provide a policy/political touchstone for current community-based efforts, in addition to building a base of grassroots support for development efforts.

RDC has experience, technical capacity, and the respect of county development agencies, and through Bill Payne, the trust of community-based developers. If their role during this current planning process can be expanded to training of citizen groups to work cooperatively with planners and teach citizens to effectively evaluate plans, the stage can be set for

institutionalization of effective community participation in the planning process. Cooperative efforts with leadership training in COP efforts should also be explored.

Given the foundations' concern regarding fragmentation among community-based efforts, they can encourage a coordinated approach to community development by requiring a clear connection or complementarity to other efforts. In order to address some of the mistakes made in the past regarding participation, progress can be evaluated not only in terms of completed projects but increased community participation, skills learned by staff, board, and the constituency of these organizations. In fact, in the initial stages the latter measures of progress should be the more important considerations.

Changing the direction of Chester's decline will take a great deal of cooperation and orchestration between Chesterites, regional funders, and all institutions that are concerned with development by and for the people of Chester. It is an effort that will also take patience. It took 50 years for Chester to reach its current state. The decline cannot be reversed in one or even 5 years. However, with a new understanding of what has brought Chester to its current state, and of the obvious and the less visible forces at work that allow the city to continue to decline, activists, concerned citizens, and planners can move Chester beyond the state of impasse.

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